

Wednesday August 12 1998

Albania D 80	Greece D 300	Omaha OR 1.00
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Czech Republic KC 50	Lithuania LT 0.50	Slovenia SI 2.50
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Comment, this section page 8

Have you the bottle to drink it?

European weather in G2

Inside Story

Jimmy Robinson's hard freedom

G2 pages 8-9

Society

Great boars of today

G2 pages 12-13

BP in world's biggest merger

£67bn takeover of Amoco agreed

David Gow
Industrial Editor

BRITISH Petroleum yesterday propelled itself into the super league of the oil and chemicals industry by taking over American rival Amoco in an agreed £67 billion deal.

market value worth more than the national output of Portugal. BP Amoco's headquarters will be in London and it will be run largely by British directors, with Sir John Browne, BP's chief executive, heading up the combined business. BP will have 60 per cent of the equity of the new company after paying a 15 per cent premium to buy up Amoco stock.

Sir John told a London news conference that around 6,000 of the two firms' 100,000-strong workforces faced the axe, with the bulk of the redundancies occurring in the US. BP employs some 17,000 in the UK out of a global workforce of 56,450.

Joining forces

	1997	1998
Q. Founded	1997	1998
Q. Employees	56,000	43,000
Q. Revenues	£44.4 billion	£22.5 billion
Q. Assets	£44.4 billion	£22.5 billion
Q. Market worth	£44.4 billion	£22.5 billion

The collapse in oil prices lay behind the steep 24 per cent drop in BP's first-half profits to £1.1 billion. BP is more dependent on oil sales than its bigger rivals and needs access to Amoco's huge

as it struggled to find overseas business. Sir John said: "Obviously when prices are falling and the world economic situation is getting weaker you have to focus on costs and getting them down."

the US's biggest producer of oil and gas. Sir John said: "International competition in the industry is already fierce and will grow more acute as new players emerge. In such a climate the best investment opportunities will go increasingly to companies that have the size and financial strength to take on those large-scale projects that offer a truly distinctive return."

bourse gas emissions — a body BP left two years ago. It feared a return to the "climate change dark ages" if Amoco executives pulled back their BP partners from their new position.



'I wondered what would happen if the spindly legs were white, would Uncle Sam's finest charge in with high technology to the rescue?'

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM STODART/PIPS

Tragedies of war grip southern Sudan

Death toll likely to rise as famine adds to the hell of 15-year conflict

Victoria Brittain

A GREAT human tragedy is continuing to unfold across southern Sudan, unseen except in pockets where aid agencies fly into grassy air strips with food and medicine for tens of thousands of people displaced by civil war between the Islamic government in Khartoum and the nomadic cattle herders of the South.

This former British colony has seen war before: 20 years ago, after a hard-brokered peace deal, Sudan was the favourite borrower of the western banks, a new producer of oil, and expected to be the breadbasket of the Arab world.

ing from government planes, or foraging by the indigenous militia paid and armed by Khartoum. Women and children from the South have been kidnapped and enslaved.

destroyed the rural economy of the more backward South. The Sudan People's Liberation Army, led by Colonel John Garang, leads the resistance, but has split, with factions bought off by Khartoum.

"I focused on the spindly black legs... I wondered what would happen if they were spindly white legs, would Uncle Sam's finest charge in with high technology to the rescue?" he asked.

nutritionist with Médecins Sans Frontières. The death rate is 60 per 10,000 a day and 130 deaths per 10,000 for children under five. Two deaths per 10,000 a day is considered an emergency.

Britons flee killer heat in Europe

Sarah Hall, Chris Morris in Ankara and Helena Smith in Athens

BRITISH tourists returning from the Mediterranean yesterday told of ruined holidays in the savage heat that is sweeping Europe and has already claimed more than 80 lives.



Extreme heat in Italy, where Sicily experienced 118F last month.

Blinking Hell

First the eyelids itch and swell up. Eventually they become so disfigured that the eyelashes turn inwards. Now every blink scratches the eyeball. Agonisingly slowly, agonisingly painfully, the victim goes blind.

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Inside

Britain
South African police are investigating a Cape Town money-laundering business run by Mark Thatcher.

World News
British troops are being sent to Bosnia to help with the peacekeeping mission.

Analysis
Chancellor's budget is a double-edged sword, but the German economy is turning a corner.

Sport
Lancashire retained its 1997-98 title over Hampshire in the first of the NatWest Trophy semi-finals.

Obituaries 10
Comment 8; Crossword 16
G2

Quick Crossword 15
Radio, TV & Weather 16



5

7

11

13



In G2 today: Craig Armstrong puts in an appearance at the Edinburgh Festival

Why Claire Dowie cast her own daughter in a show about child abuse

Manufacturing orders fall and 1,300 more jobs cut □ £28 billion wiped off value of leading shares as global confidence wobbles

CBI says slump is now nationwide

Charlotte Derry and David Goss

THE malaise in manufacturing has spread to all regions of Britain, the Confederation of British Industry warned yesterday. But the Government stuck to its insistence that the strong pound was not the cause, blaming Asia's massive economic downturn instead.

The Treasury Chief Secretary, Stephen Byers, said the Far East crisis was responsible for the latest round of British redundancies, which were "nothing whatsoever" to do with sterling.

His comments followed news that three British companies — BOC, the industrial gases group; Molins, which makes machinery for the manufacture of cigarettes; and Royal Ordnance, the small-arms producer — were cutting more than 1,300 jobs between them. The huge mer-

ger announced yesterday between oil giants BP and Amoco is expected to lead to further redundancies.

The FTSE 100 index of major stocks went tumbling, due to a global attack of nerves over the far-reaching effects of the Asian meltdown. More than £28 billion was wiped off the value of leading shares as the index hurtled downwards for the third day in a row, closing at its lowest level for seven months.

A sharp rise in the numbers unemployed and claiming benefit is expected, too, in jobless figures out today.

Mr Byers said falling orders from Asia were to blame for manufacturing's problems. "The reality is that we are seeing a recession in the Far East and as a result of that some companies based here in the UK who trade worldwide are having to make some very difficult and very painful decisions," he said.

"BOC today have said the main reason is to do with a downturn in the world market. We've lost 500 jobs in BOC announced today — that's disappointing. They have announced 4,000 jobs are to go worldwide — that can't be the fault of the level of sterling," he said.

But the CBI said the strong pound was adding to the impact of the Asian crisis by making it harder for companies throughout the country to sell their goods abroad. Its latest survey of industry

shows that for the first time since the end of the last recession in the early 90s, orders are down as confidence collapses in every region of Britain — bar Northern Ireland, where the peace process has buoyed business hopes.

"The strength of the pound is having an impact on manufacturing right across the mainland," said Sudhir Jankar, the CBI's associate director of economics.

Export orders fell steeply in most regions, particularly the North-west, Yorkshire and the East Midlands.

Announcing the closure of its Peterborough factory yesterday, with the loss of 350 jobs, Molins blamed sterling's strength for harming its sales of cigarette-machinery. BOC said its planned 500 job cuts were part of a productivity drive to improve productivity in the face of tougher overseas competition.

The TUC general secretary, John Monks, said a recession in manufacturing was inevitable unless the Bank of England cuts the cost of borrowing. "The Government should bring forward its investment plans to stabilise the domestic economy, targeted at areas of high unemployment," he added.

Earlier in the day the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, sharply denied charges that the Labour Government saw job losses as a necessary price to achieve its long-term economic goals.

Britons flee killer heat in Europe

continued from page 1

trast to previous years, hospitals and first aid centres in Greece have been put on alert for most of the summer, while hotels are warning tourists not to venture outdoors.

In Cyprus, seeing its most severe heatwave for 30 years, numerous Britons have been treated for heatstroke by in-house hotel doctors — while in Turkey, the heat has been so extreme that a thermometer with a 50 degree Celsius (125F) capacity blew up in the middle sun in the south-eastern city of Adana.

As the Association of British Travel Agents and tour operators renewed their calls to holidaymakers to take precautions against the vicious rays, those returning to Gatwick sported either blistered sunburns or pale flesh barely shown the sun.

"This is my sun tan. It's nothing, is it?" said Jane Thorncroft, aged 30, a computer company administrator from Warfield, Berkshire, as she returned from three weeks with her parents near Malaga. "The heat was horrendous. It was 45 in the shade and 116 in the sun. We just couldn't move from our covered patio. Another time we'll go later."

Lynsey McCormack, a 19-year-old returning from a week in Majorca with two girlfriends, was blasé about her scorched skin but admitted she could not contend with the heat.

"It's been savage — and, at night time, it was disgusting," said Ms McCormack, a customer relations adviser from Camberley, Surrey. "There was no air conditioning in our apartments and we ended up sleeping on the floor because it seemed cooler. In the day, it was hard enough to manage but you just coped by dunking yourself in the sea all the time, or staying inside. But at night, there was just no relief."

For Susan and Vincent Clapham, from Ringwood, Hampshire, the heat in Palma, Majorca, was so severe that they left for an Easter or September holiday next year.

"It really was too hot," said Mrs Clapham. "It was sweltering from nine in the morning through to nine at night. I just stayed in the shade and then we hired an air-conditioned car to drive around and escape the heat."

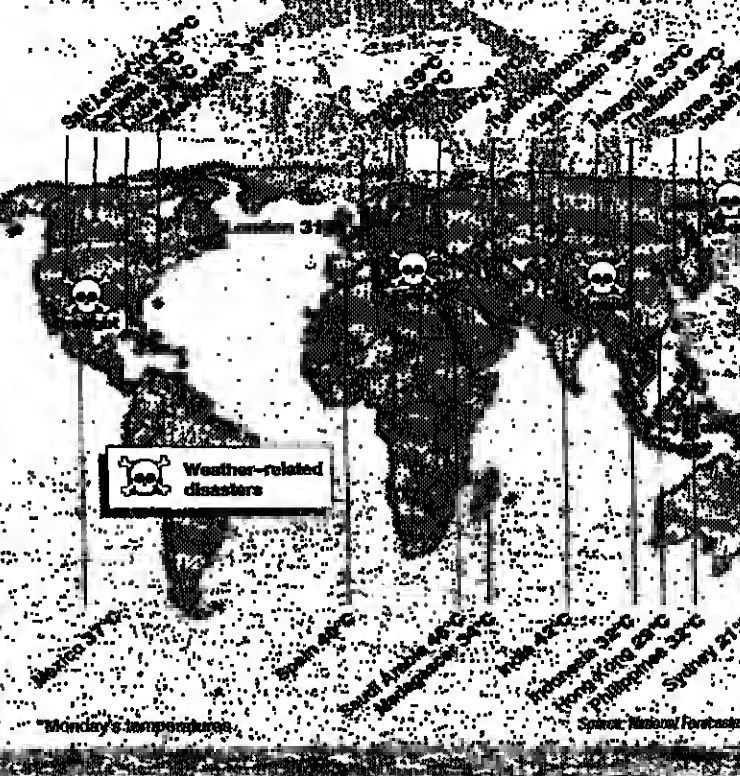
With reports of large numbers of people having heart attacks at the Acropolis in Athens, and more than 70 dying in Turkey after falling from rooftops as they tried to sleep, England was yesterday viewed as a preferable place.

"I come over every August," said 73-year-old expatriate Leonard Axworthy, who he retired 12 years ago, and where temperatures recently topped a near-record of 104F. "It's just too hot over there. I should have retired to Norway or Iceland."

Scorched earth

The first six months of 1998 have been the warmest since reliable records began in 1860. Provisional observations show that the temperature averaged over June has been some 0.6°C greater than the average climate. Each individual month in 1998 so far has been the warmest such month on record.

Planet greenhouse: Yes, today's hottest temperatures



World's temperatures

It's getting hotter — and there's no escape

Future fear as global temperature hits 1,000-year high. Tim Radford reports

IT WAS just another day on Planet Greenhouse. Vice President Al Gore has just pronounced July the hottest month on earth since records began. "You don't have to be a scientist to know it has been dangerously hot this summer," he said, putting global warming and the spectre of climate change firmly back on the political agenda.

But it had been there all the time. Nine of the 10 warmest years since records began have occurred since 1983. Five of those have happened in this decade. Last year was the warmest experienced on the planet. July was the hottest month — not the hottest

July, but the hottest month — but the weathermen more or less knew it would turn out like that. In April, just on a survey of average temperatures around the world, they were already fairly sure that 1998 would be the warmest year of them all. By June, with the year only half over, they were certain it would be that way.

Worldwide, weathermen record daily temperatures a metre or two above ground, and then pool the data. Teams in the Met Office at Bracknell in Berkshire, the University of East Anglia and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Colorado compare the read-

ings with the long-term average temperature readings from 1861 to 1990.

The results are ominous. Although record-keeping on a global scale only began in 1860, the 12 months that ended in May were already the warmest 12 months the planet had experienced, probably in the last 1,000 years. The average temperatures from January to June this year worldwide have been about 0.6°C higher than the long-term average. The previous record year — last year — was 0.43°C above average. Each individual month in 1998 has been the warmest such month on record.

And, say the scientists, Britain has nothing to complain about. "People might say we have had a pretty bad summer, but the summer so far in Britain has been aver-

age," said David Viner, of the University of East Anglia's climate research unit. "It is just that we have had some very exceptional summers over the last four or five years and we have got used to those. Across the globe, the last 18 months have been exceptionally warm, and probably the warmest in the millennium."

The Met Office called July in Britain the coldest and wettest since 1993 — just slightly below averages recorded since 1653, and still dry when compared with rainfall averages kept since 1766. In other words, Britain's so-so summer was just a little dissonant detail in the big picture, of a world inexorably getting warmer year after year.

Neither Vice-president Gore nor Dr Viner in Norwich have any doubt as to why. They blame it on human

activity: on carbon dioxide from power station chimneys and car exhausts; on oxides of nitrogen from agricultural and factory wastes, on methane belched from grazing animals and rice paddies, on a mixture of gases from smouldering and felled forests. It is almost 100 years since the Swedish chemist Svante Arrhenius proposed that certain gases acted like glass in a greenhouse: they let the sun's rays through but trapped the heat that would otherwise bounce back into space.

Without atmospheric carbon dioxide, the world would be permanently freezing. With too much, the icecaps would melt and many cities would be under water. As it is, temperatures will rise by between 1.5°C and 4.5°C in the next century, and sea levels by up to 10cms a decade.

Nobody knows what the effects will be: ocean currents such as the Gulf Stream could shift, plunging Britain into paradoxical cold, and the US cornbelt could tip towards a desert. Other places will expect catastrophic flooding. Tropical diseases will spread their range, insect pests could multiply, malaria could return to northern Europe, warmer seas will mean fiercer hurricanes.

"There is a cause and effect here. We know it is down to increasing levels of carbon dioxide," said Dr Viner. Mr Gore wants action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But Dr Viner sees even further warming as inevitable. "Even if we were to reduce their range, insect pests could return to northern Europe, warmer seas will mean fiercer hurricanes."

Peter and the Wolf was one of his first efforts at fulfilling his political obligations, and then came the Cantata, in which he took goblets of Marx, Engels and Lenin and shaped them into a hymn to the glorious history of the revolution, ending with a version of one of Stalin's speeches to the Congress of Soviets. Yet the plan misfired: when Prokofiev played and sang through his gargantuan score to the Committee of Artists Affairs, it was rejected as unfit for performance because of its complexity and was never played in his lifetime.

The centrepiece of the rambling structure is a depiction of the course of the 1917 revolution, told through Lenin's words, punctuated by volleys of machine-gun fire, sirens and alarms, and the sounds of the 10 accordeons, used to represent the victory of the Russian spirit; another orchestral movement portrays industrialisation and the success of the collective farms.

Elder, who had already conducted brooding accounts of Berlioz's Hamlet Funeral March and Britten's Sinfonia da Requiem, made the most of every one of these grotesqueries. The BBC Symphony and the Philharmonia Chorus joined the orchestra and its special recruits, Gerard McBurney, complete with a Lenin cap, urged the revolution on through a megaphone. It isn't a piece that any of them is going to perform every day, or even every five years, but as a one-off it made a fascinating historical snapshot.

This review appeared in later editions yesterday.

The rays in Spain fall mainly on the deserted plaza

David Sharrock in Salamanca

IT'S hot and there's only one solution — stop moving altogether and put up with it. Roasting weather in August hardly comes as a surprise to Spaniards, most of whom decamp to the coast as the country all but closes down for the month.

But for those unfortunate enough to be left behind at home this year, August is a crueler month than normal. Central and northern

Spain have been suffering temperatures not experienced in nearly 40 years. The heat has become the only topic of conversation as street temperatures register 40 degrees Celsius by mid-afternoon. The people of cities such as Salamanca, Valladolid, Segovia and Burgos are melting and wilting.

Foreign tourists scarcely penetrate Spain's stifling interior, but those who have few who want to see what the country is really like are finding that the only people out and about dur-

ing daylight hours are visitors like themselves. The town hall clock strikes noon in Salamanca's splendid Plaza Mayor, treated by Salmantinos as their living room, it seems to have been requisitioned by peeling blonde giants from northern Europe.

The city's year-round residents are sitting out the heatwave in shattered homes, with only flickering illumination from television programmes.

Motion is kept to a minimum. Little stirrers until the sun dips below the horizon

and life can return to a semblance of normality. The plaza resumes its role. Dinners are served on the terraces at around midnight, when the temperature has dipped to a pleasant 26°C.

Much of the region of Castilla and León crept into the danger zone this week when temperatures rose above the 37°C officially established as the maximum tolerable before emergency measures become necessary. But so far hospitals and emergency services have reported no increase

in calls, praising the caution with which Castilians are approaching the crisis. Having suffered the wettest winter and the hottest summer in decades, one might be forgiven for expecting greater concern about global warming. A report published last month claimed that most of Spain would be desert in 50 years.

If it were not so dry and dusty, phlegmatic might spring to mind as the best description of the public response to the heat. But the truth is probably that

nobody has the energy to think about anything except whether there is another cold beer in the fridge.

In fact, watching the weather map on the television news every lunchtime (3.30pm), with so many perfect "fried eggs" massed across the Iberian peninsula and the train-spotterish weatherman worrying day after day about a few wisps of cumulus hovering over the Azores, the only sensible response is to draw down the shutters even further.

Majestic folly of Prokofiev revolt

Review

Andrew Clements

BBC Symphony Orchestra/Mark Elder, Royal Albert Hall, Radio 3

THERE are massive choral works dotted all the way through this Proms season, but none so massive nor so doctory as Prokofiev's Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution, the rowdy and uproarious climax to Mark Elder's programme with the BBCSO. Despite its massed choruses, military and accordion bands, and a whole battery of special effects as well as a full symphony orchestra, the Cantata is no masterpiece, but it is one of the great period pieces of 20th century music and the Albert Hall turned out to be just the place for such a majestic folly.

Prokofiev wrote it in 1936 and 1937, specifically to ingratiate himself with Stalin. He had been lured home from self-imposed exile at the end of 1935, with assurances from the authorities that he would be able to continue his concert career in the West while, in return, he would put his music at the service of the regime.

Peter and the Wolf was one of his first efforts at fulfilling his political obligations, and then came the Cantata, in which he took goblets of Marx, Engels and Lenin and shaped them into a hymn to the glorious history of the revolution, ending with a version of one of Stalin's speeches to the Congress of Soviets. Yet the plan misfired: when Prokofiev played and sang through his gargantuan score to the Committee of Artists Affairs, it was rejected as unfit for performance because of its complexity and was never played in his lifetime.

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How Ma
spy hunt



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How Mata Hari led spy hunters a dance

Record of interrogation reveals how an ageing dancer became 'the most sinister adventuress in the world'. Alan Travis reports

MATA HARI, who was condemned as the "world's most sinister adventuress" on her execution, was arrested and interrogated three times on suspicion of espionage at the height of the first world war by the British authorities but released each time, according to secret state papers deposited at the Public Record Office.

The Scotland Yard Special Branch files show that the 20th century's most famous female spy was even allowed to stay at the Savoy hotel in London before being put on a boat to Spain.

But with a tragic irony that would have thrilled Greta Garbo and the Hollywood screenwriters who created the modern myth of Mata Hari, the transcripts of her interrogation reveal that she escaped by claiming she was working for Captain Georges Ledoux — then head of French counter-intelligence and the man who was subsequently to be responsible for her execution.

The papers confirm the accounts that Madame Margarete Zelle, to use her real name, claimed to have acted as a double agent in the war. MI5 officers joked with her at one point that it must have been "awkward to have a levee of all the belligerent countries in your room".

Her reputation as "the great dancer Mata Hari" was made with her prewar dance show in Paris, in which she slowly stripped completely naked using a mixture of in-

tertainment and Oriental dance movements. During her Scotland Yard interrogation in November 1916 she confirmed she was already 40 and that she had had two children after marrying, at 19, a man named Rudolph Macleod who was 22 years her senior. They had divorced in 1907.

One child had died in India and her daughter was then 16. On that occasion she was allowed to travel to France after nothing was found in her luggage to incriminate her even though she was "still regarded with suspicion by military and police".

But it was her performance during her detention in November 1916 which saved her life in Britain. She was questioned for three days at Scotland Yard by Military Intelligence officers whose names are only recorded as ACC and DID, Lord Harschell and Major Drake.

During the second day she understood, I thought a long time. I said: 'I can't.' He said: 'Would you?' I said: 'Yes. I would.' 'Would you ask much money?' he said. I said: 'If I give you plenty of satisfaction I ask you 1,000,000.'

"He said: 'Go to Holland, and you will receive my instructions.' 'If it is for Germany I do not like to go.' 'No,' he said, 'it is for Belgium.' So I awaited his instructions."

Asked to give a description of Captain Ledoux — who was at that time the notoriously ineffectual head of French counter-intelligence — she accurately described him as a fat man with a very black beard and black hair, and who wore spectacles. "He always had a little cigarette in his lips," she added.

It seems to have done the trick for MI5 released her and she was even allowed to stay at her favourite haunt of the Savoy before being dispatched to Spain to spy on German agents for Ledoux.

But if Ledoux's name got her off the hook in London he was to prove her eventual nemesis. Authoritative histories say that he had her arrested on her return to Paris and the fact that her "client list" read like a Who's Who of French politicians meant her trial attracted huge publicity.

Ledoux, who was accused of allowing German agents to flourish in Paris, ensured that she was shot. His sensationalised "fiction" book on Mata Hari, published in 1932, portrayed her arrest as one of the greatest French victories of the war.

With a little 1930s help from Greta Garbo, he succeeded in presenting Marguerite Zelle not as an ageing dancer in her declining years playing a dangerous double game but as the glamorous wixen remembered by history.

Leader comment, page 9



The real Mata Hari... an ageing dancer in her declining years playing a dangerous double game that ended in her death



The legendary Mata Hari... spy-and-tail portrayals by Greta Garbo (above left) in the 1930s and Sylvie Kristel in 1984



Cases for the prosecution

MATA HARI had no fewer than 10 pieces of luggage at the time of her arrest in London in November 1916. The contents were listed as:

□ One small wooden box containing a gilt clock.

□ Hat box containing: six hats, two hat pins, white feather boa, one veil, two fur necklets, two fur hoods, two hat decorations, one imitation peach, one dressing gown.

□ Trunk containing: one pair of boots, one brush, one bundle wadding, one pair of puttees, one pair of spurs, three pairs of shoes, three chemises, one napkin, one pair of leggings, three veils, one box of ribbons, two brass shells, two belts, two

undershirts, three skirts, one dress, four pair gloves, one umbrella, three sunshades, one douch, three scarfs, one night dress case, one coat, one costume, one bag of dirty linen, one bundle sanitary towels, one box of soap, four hair ornaments, one hat pin and false hair, three fur necklets, one bottle Vernis Mordore Dore, one box of powder, one bottle of white fluid.

□ Boot trunk containing: six pairs of slippers, one box face cream, three pairs of shoes, two pairs of socks, one pair of stockings.

□ Trunk containing: two pairs of corsets, 30 pairs of stockings, one lavender packet, one veil, eight under bodices, one shawl, 10 pairs of knickers,

three princess petticoats, three combs, two dressing jackets, 11 chemises, one dressing gown, one towel, one garter, two coats, one petticoat, two pairs of gloves, two powder puffs.

□ Trunk containing: one handbag with mirror inside, one hair comb, three coats, one fancy box, one box of confetti, copper plate and visiting card in the name of Madame de Massloff, Capitaine, 1er, Regiment Spil Imperial, Russe.

□ Wooden box containing: china tea service.

□ Gladstone bag containing: one pair of shoes, nail polisher, two boxes of confetti, cigarettes, eight hair nets, box visiting

cards, box soap, sachet confetti, 21 handkerchiefs, one empty cash box, pearl necklace in case, monacle in case, two earrings in box, two pearls in case, green stone ring in case, two earrings in box, two pearls in case, green stone ring in case, green stone necklace and two earrings in case, three fans, Holdall of cotton, needles, etc., handbag containing cigarette case (two photos inside), powder puff and rouge stick on chain, boat tickets, sterling francs, gulden, pesetas and Russian notes, two pieces of music, Spanish and French dictionary, bundle of photographs, crayon drawing.

□ One travelling rug.

□ One fitted lady's dressing bag.

Price hike drug firm broke rules

Sarah Boseley
Health Correspondent

THE Department of Health is urgently investigating the sudden massive price rise of a drug used to prevent haemorrhage in women who have given birth.

Alliance Pharmaceuticals, based in Chippenham, Wiltshire has put up the price of Syntometrine from 18p per 1ml ampoule to £1.40 since it bought the licence from the giant Swiss company Novartis on June 29. There is no substitute for the drug, and the price increase will cost the NHS nearly an extra £1 million a year.

But yesterday, following the Guardian's revelation of

the price hike, it was revealed that Alliance, which merged with Ciba to become Novartis in March last year, has flouted the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme (PPRS) which the drug companies supplying the NHS negotiate with the Department of Health. Alliance owner John Dawson used to be financial director of Sandoz Pharmaceuticals.

"When a product licence is sold, the PPRS requires that any price changes should be agreed with the Department," said a spokesman. "However, Alliance Pharmaceuticals implemented new prices without the department's agreement and has yet to respond to the department's requests for information. We are continuing to pursue this matter

urgently." But some believe Alliance's defiance of the rules exposes cracks in the PPRS which may yet bring it crashing down.

Dr Joe Collier, editor of the Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin, said: "If it is as widespread, like this is widespread, and I suspect it is, then it spells the demise of the PPRS." Alliance is a new company, launched and owned by John Dawson. Yesterday Mr Dawson said he left before the merger of Sandoz and Ciba to set Alliance up. He then applied to Novartis for the licence of some of the drugs that the newly merged company was willing to offload because, in their view, they had become uneconomic.

The most potentially profitable drugs were Syntometrine

and Syntocinon, which is used in some areas in substantial quantities to induce labour. Syntocinon's price has gone up from 13.5p to £1.38 for the 5ml dose, and from 22.4p to £1.27 for the 10ml dose. The cost to the NHS if it continues to use Syntocinon in current quantities will be an extra £2 million. Mr Dawson has secured 16 product licences from Novartis, and the prices of all the medicines have gone up significantly, although some are much less used than Syntometrine and Syntocinon.

Mr Dawson said yesterday he was talking to the Department of Health about the price rises. "I am giving them the information they want. This is not a new issue. Mature products are transferred

from big companies to little companies. It is not as if I have come along and suddenly created this."

He said he won the product licences from Novartis against competition from other companies. "When I started talking to them about these products it was certainly a very arms length affair. I'd hate anyone to run away with the idea that it was a very cosy deal. I was put through the mill on what service I was going to continue giving to their products. This was uppermost in their minds." A spokeswoman for Novartis said the decision to transfer ownership to Alliance was "based on their ability to provide the level of support and continuity required for future supply."

Arkansas boys guilty of murdering schoolmates

Martin Kettle in Washington

TWO schoolboy friends were convicted yesterday of the murder of four classmates and a teacher they shot dead in Jonesboro, Arkansas, earlier this year.

Mitchell Johnson, who had his 14th birthday yesterday, pleaded guilty on all counts. His fellow accused, Andrew Golden, aged 12, pleaded not guilty but offered no defence. Judge Ralph Wilson found both boys guilty of shooting the four girls, aged 11 and 12, and their teacher Shannon Wright, after setting off the fire alarm on March 24 to lure them out of the school.

The two were due to be sentenced later, but under Arkansas juvenile law they will be released when they reach 18. Their criminal records will be wiped clean, making them eligible to buy firearms.

As the Jonesboro schoolboys were waiting to be sentenced, two Chicago children, aged seven and eight, became the youngest murder defendants in contemporary United States history after being charged with killing an 11-year-old girl last month.

The girl, Ryan Harris, disappeared on July 27 after going cycling with the eight-year-old boy in the city's poor southern suburbs. Police allege that on Sun-

day the boys confessed, saying they threw stones at Ryan, knocking her off her bike, and then dragged her to wooded land in the Englewood area. The seven-year-old told detectives that they pulled Ryan's underwear down, and stuffed it into her mouth.

Medical evidence said the girl died from asphyxiation and two blows to the head. She was sexually molested with an unspecified object.

The boys were charged on Monday after a juvenile court appearance at which neither was tall enough to be seen over the defence table. They sat drawing and playing with a packet of sweets.

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Suppliers introduce longer pasteurisation times as 'massively precautionary measure' while minister seeks to reassure the public

Dairies take action in milk scare

James Melkie

MILK suppliers last night began lengthening pasteurisation times to reinforce public confidence in their products, as the Government said there should be no scare over its safety.

Supermarket chain Tesco asked its suppliers for changes as "a massively precautionary measure" following the announcement that national tests were to be conducted to establish whether there was any link between a cattle disease and chronic inflammation of the intestine in humans.

A Tesco spokesman said: "We are confident milk is still safe." Milk will be heated for 25 seconds instead of 15 seconds, which the Dairy Industry Federation said was itself "perfectly safe to destroy all pathogens".

Jeff Rooker, the minister responsible for food safety, emphasised milk remained safe to drink. He said on BBC Radio 4: "There is no justification for a problem with pasteurised milk at the present time — there is no need for anyone to change their diet."

The minister said a nationwide survey of more than 1,000 milk samples had been ordered following a pilot study in Northern Ireland.

"The pilot study indicates that there may be a problem."

"We have been quite open and transparent about that, because the way to have a food scare in this country is to not tell people what you know, if we were carrying out this survey, and had kept the pilot

study results quiet and then they were leaked at some point in the future... There is no scare on the safety of milk."

Over the next 18 months tests will be done for mycobacterium tuberculosis, thought to affect between 3 and 5 per cent of the 11.4 million cattle in Britain. There is a scientific dispute over whether the disease may transfer to humans as Crohn's disease, which affects more than 50,000 people nationwide, and, with related diseases, may kill 175 a year.

The Northern Ireland results are unconfirmed, and Norman Simmonds, a government food safety adviser, has played down any possible risk. "At best, there is no risk; at worst, one in 5 million if you drink a glass of milk"

At best, there is no risk at all. "At worst, if those people who think it's capable of causing human disease are correct, at worst I have calculated myself that the risk is about one in 5 million if you drink a glass of milk."

Farmers say that their part of the dairy industry is already "on the floor" due to low milk prices. But Tim Bennett, the deputy president of the National Farmers' Union, endorsed the open approach.

"Ultimately, if people are going to be given the facts, take them on board, use them in a realistic and sensible way, it will be a benefit to the con-

sumer and the food industry — there will be confidence in food from the farm to the retailer."

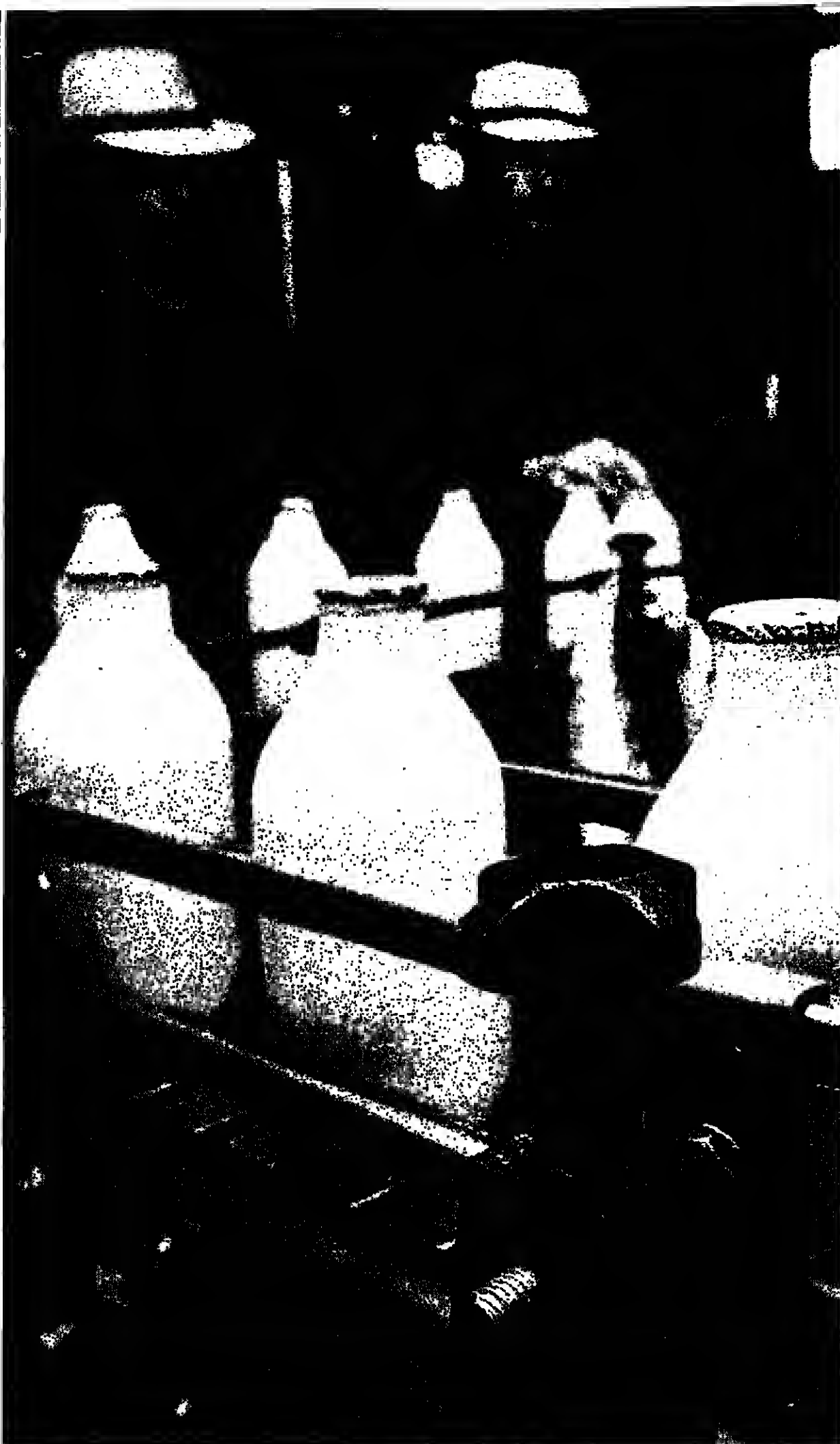
"But people must listen to facts, not to scaremongering." Nevertheless, the episode has resurrected political debate over food issues. It is widely believed that the establishment of a Food Standards Agency responsible to the Department of Health rather than to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food may be delayed.

The agriculture ministry said last night that it still wanted a bill to set up the agency in the legislative programme and was ready to publish it.

However, a plan to cull badgers because of the perceived risk of the wild animals spreading TB to cows has become the most pressing item on the ministry's agenda — officials and ministers are petrified of opposition from "badger huggers".

Food advisers have made repeated calls for ministers to ban unpasteurised milk — 0.1 per cent of the 5.5 million litres annual output — because of links with food poisoning that appear more well founded than that between milk and Crohn's disease. But bans — like that for beef on the bone — can backfire, and ministers are wary. They are now also struggling to win a publicity battle with opponents of genetically modified foods, and face a major problem in assessing possible food hazards and how they should present those risks to the public.

Sheila McKechnie, page 8; Leader comment, page 9



Pinta precaution... Dairies are increasing pasteurisation time to reassure the public

PHOTOGRAPH: BARRY BACHELOR

BSE and other alarms

□ **BSE:** Fatal cattle condition thought, but not proved, to have spread to humans through cheap meat products such as beefburgers. Twenty-seven people believed to have died. Measures to protect human food chain now thought adequate. Likely cost to EU and British taxpayer, £4 billion. Cost to farmers and victims' families incalculable. Cattle cull may top 8 million.

□ **Salmonella in eggs:** At first thought more serious than BSE. Cost then junior health minister Edwina Currie her job in 1988 when she suggested most of Britain's egg production was infected with salmonella. Two million chickens slaughtered in four years up to 1993. Incidence — one egg box of six in 100 may be infected — little changed in five years from 1991-5. Most virulent form caused 103 outbreaks of food poisoning in 1995/6. Deaths from all types of food poisoning caused by salmonella thought to have dropped from 70 in 1990 to about 30 a year. Government advice not to eat raw or lightly cooked eggs, especially elderly people, pregnant women and children.

□ **E-Coli 157:** Vicious bug often found in raw or undercooked meat — beefburgers again. First recognised in early 1980s. Worst case in Lanarkshire, thought responsible for death of 20 people in November 1996. Annual death toll usually far lower but can be responsible for serious kidney and blood disorders and violent sickness. Also found in raw milk — prompting frustration among government health advisers, who have failed to persuade ministers to insist all milk be pasteurised.

□ **Listeria:** Biggest scares in 1988 and 1989 related to cheese, pâté, and cook-chill foods. Pregnant women particularly at risk.

□ **Alarm Alert:** In 1989 after it emerged that millions of apples were sprayed with Alar, a chemical said to cause cancer.

□ **Benzene:** More than 2.25 million cans and bottles of fizzy soft drinks and water were recalled earlier this summer after traces of cancer-causing benzene were found in carbon dioxide supplies. Damage control by Government and industry was successful.

Checking tightened on crossover TB in cattle

James Melkie

THE Department of Health has ordered extra checks on the incidence of a strain of tuberculosis that can be caught from cattle, following the rapid growth of the disease in British herds.

The department stressed last night that it was being "ultra-cautious" in strengthening its surveillance of a disease that is thought to afflict 40 people a year and that may become evident only after infection many years previously.

The TB can be caught either through unpasteurised milk or, by those working closely with cattle, from droplets from sick animals. The symptoms are similar to other strains — fever and coughing, sometimes with blood and weight loss.

The extra monitoring will include questioning the discover whether people display-

ing the human disease have drunk unpasteurised milk, live in a farming area, or are in any way associated with cattle. We are being ultra-cautious... if there was any possible increase [in the human disease] we would be on top of it immediately.

There will also be checks on the molecular and genetic make-up of samples which doctors send for analysis to establish more clearly methods of transmission. "The health department said it appeared most people with the bovine form of TB had been infected before pasteurisation. Only 0.01 per cent of milk is now sold unpasteurised."

A spokeswoman said: "The cause of the existing problem is the cattle. We are being ultra-cautious... if there was any possible increase [in the human disease] we would be on top of it immediately. There does not appear to be a human health problem."

Van Buijnder, a consultant epidemiologist for the Public Health Laboratory Service,

which will undertake the extra monitoring, said: "There has been very little change in numbers over the last four years. In the 1940s and 1950s about 10 per cent of TB cases were down to *M. bovis*. Since then there has been a dramatic decline."

"Most people affected are elderly people who almost certainly were infected in the 40s and 50s and are now showing signs of the disease."

Farmers are deeply concerned by the spread of the disease in cattle, which affected 515 herds last year, up from 143 in 1990. It can cost a farmer £3,000 a month through the slaughter of infected animals and restrictions placed on the movement of herds. The National Farmers' Union says the entire cattle population is under threat.

Ministers are preparing a cull of badgers, which also carry TB, to establish whether they are the source of the cattle infection.

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Drink-drivers 'paid for bogus evidence'

Jury told of 'rent-a-witness who concocted nonsense reports'

MOTORISTS facing drink-drive charges paid thousands of pounds for bogus scientific evidence to be given in court to save their licences, it was alleged at the Old Bailey yesterday.

For years, Godwin Onubogu hired himself out to drivers as a bogus expert witness, said Louise Kamill, prosecuting.

"He was, you may say, a rent-a-witness. He was prepared to dress lies up in scientific language, in order to deceive courts throughout London," she told the jury.

Onubogu, aged 57, from Balham, south London, has denied intending to pervert the course of justice on occasions between 1990 and 1996.

It was alleged he was prepared to concoct defences "for men who were prepared to pay for the privilege".

Miss Kamill said: "He was prepared to do that for drink-drivers who were desperate to keep their licences and prepared to pay for his services. They paid very large sums of money in cash."

She said he used "sufficient quasi-scientific language — enough to bamboozle benches of magistrates".

Onubogu might conclude a driver was suffering from a particular disease for which he was taking medication, Miss Kamill said. He might conclude that blood or urine tests taken by the police could not be relied on and the court would be wrong to convict the motorist of drink-driving.

"His favourite conclusion was that Mr X was an unwilling victim of his aberrant biochemistry," she said.

The prosecution alleged the prepared reports appeared to come from a forensic scientist.

They were signed by a man with letters after his name. "They were bogus facts and bogus conclusions," Miss Kamill told the jury.

They would hear about 13 drivers, she said.

Onubogu made sure his reports — on headed, notepaper — were presentable. "Anyone would think it was a proper expert report. No one would notice the duplication over and over again — how he re-used one man's report for another."

"It was only noticed when police went to the Forensic Science Service — a laboratory they used themselves," said Miss Kamill.

A man there had three different reports from Onubogu from three different courts. He noticed the duplication and their bogus nature, she alleged. When he heard Onubogu in court "he realised this man was talking nonsense".

He had a laboratory in Balham where he performed some laboratory services

which he advertised. But they did not include analysis of blood or urine for alcohol, the court heard. The motorists went to him largely by referral.

When police visited his premises with an experienced

chemist from the FSS, they were shown to a small, cluttered room. "He had various pieces of equipment, none of which were capable of measuring alcohol in blood or urine," Miss Kamill said.

The trial continues today.

Prescott dips into Mandelson's policy pot

THE Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, stuck his ear yesterday into the European Union row over landing rights at Heathrow and Gatwick, valued at £500 million and a policy area usually handled by the Trade and Industry Secretary, Peter Mandelson, writes Ewen MacAskill.

The European Union has ordered the British Airways — American Airlines alliance

to give some take-off and landing slots to competitors. Mr Prescott signalled yesterday the alliance should not charge for the slots.

The slots do not belong to British Airways. They belong to the community," he said.

But the Office of Fair Trading has recommended that the alliance does charge for the slots. Consultation ends on September 4 and Mr Mandelson, who is in charge of

competitions policy, has to make a decision.

A DTI source said Mr Mandelson, who went on holiday yesterday, had not decided and colleagues' views did not come into it. Mr Prescott's department said he could comment because of his position and because Mr Mandelson had not been around.

BA's rival, Virgin, has insisted that the slots are not BA's to sell.

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Users and dealers face heavy penalties

DIY guide prompts banning of 36 designer drugs

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

THE Home Office last night announced it was banning a swathe of New Age "designer drugs" similar to ecstasy, with heavy penalties available to the courts for their manufacture, dealing or possession.

The Government's concern about the drugs stems from the easy availability through the Internet of a "do-it-yourself" guide to the 36 synthetic substances which are being banned. Many are mescaline-related chemicals.

The book, *Pinkal: A Chemical Love Story*, by Alexander and Ann Shulgin, was published in California in 1991 and provides a detailed chemical and technical guide to the production of 179 phenethylamines, including the group to be banned in Britain.

Mr Shulgin, a former Dow Chemical scientist, has been described as the Calvin Klein of designer drugs and the stepfather of ecstasy. He does, however, give a cautionary note that no one should try to synthesise the drugs without legal authority as doing so could lead to "tragic ruin of a life".

However, readers have posted rave reviews of the book on the Internet website, praising it for scientific objectivity and readability, with something for everyone from chemists to the curious. One



George Howarth: 'measures will slam the stable door'

Dutch fan calls it "a very good book especially if you like to try any psychedelic substance".

The Home Office Minister, George Howarth, said there was evidence that these "designer drugs" were being produced in Europe. Fifty thousand tablets of two of the drugs to be banned had been seized.

He said: "We all know the dangers of ecstasy and the Government has a responsibility to do all it can to prevent more of these types of substances from being launched on the illicit market. Strict controls are essential to prevent the misuse of these ecstasy-type substances."

"Although there is little

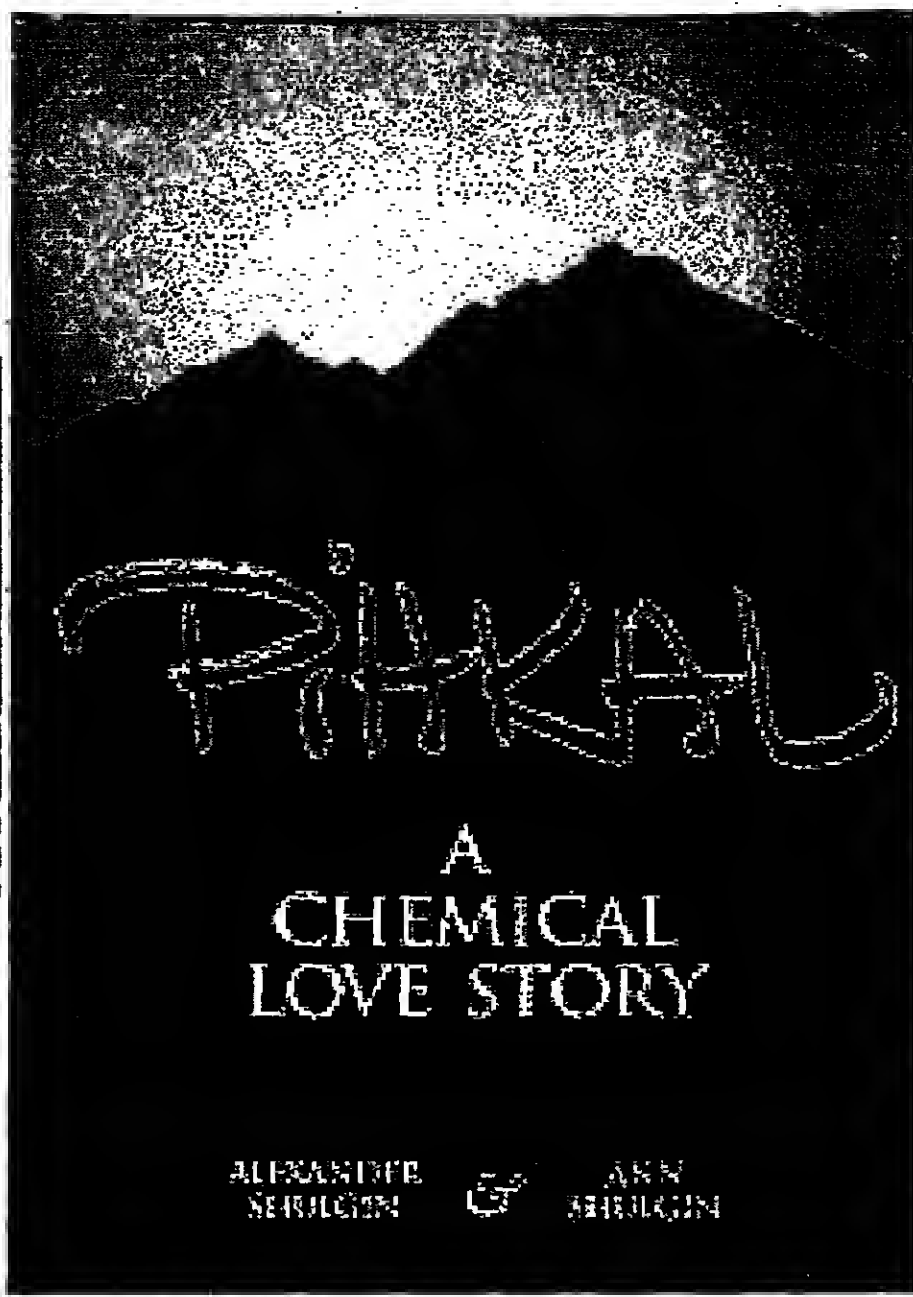
evidence of their misuse in the UK, these measures will slam the stable door firmly shut before the horse has bolted."

Thirty-five of the 36 drugs are to be treated as Class A substances, meaning that possession could attract a prison sentence of up to seven years and dealing in them a life sentence.

The Shulgin book, which is subtitled *Phenethylamines I Have Known and Loved*, gives detailed descriptions of the effects of each of the drugs. For example, TMA, one of those to be banned, is described as an active and more potent drug than mescaline itself.

A 140 mg dose of TMA lasts about six to eight hours and Mr Shulgin says it produced no nausea but "somehow my personality was divided and exposed". It produced a good humour and an over-approximation of jokes: "The images behind the eyes were remarkable and tied in with the music and I became annoyed at other people's conversations that got in the way."

The Home Office is expected to confirm the proposed ban after a consultation period ending on September 18. As yet there are no official plans to outlaw the second group of chemical substances described in the Shulgins' second popular volume — *Tihkal: The Continuation*, which is an acronym for *Tryptamines I Have Known and Loved*.



The book by Alexander and Ann Shulgin has drawn rave reviews on its Internet site.

Police inquiry looks at loans firm owned by Mark Thatcher

Alex Duval Smith
in Johannesburg

SOUTH AFRICAN fraud police are investigating a Cape Town money-lending business run by Mark Thatcher after claims that the company used senior police officers as freelance agents to offer loans to poorly-paid colleagues at monthly interest rates of up to 20 per cent.

Although small loans companies are legal in South Africa the lending activities of Baroness Thatcher's son are being investigated because of claims that 15 "book-runners" were offered perks and did not seek permission from their superiors to act as freelance intermediaries.

After reports of the police investigation in British and South African newspapers, Superintendent John Sterrenberg of Cape Town police said yesterday: "We are investigating possible breaches of common law and of the police code of conduct."

According to the newspaper reports, Mr Thatcher, aged 46, who moved to South Africa in 1985 from the United States, has made small loans to at least 900 policemen and women, military staff and civil servants in the Western Cape area and Durban.

The borrowers were allegedly approached through senior police officers who acted as book runners, lending amounts averaging 1,270 rands (£127).

The book runners were allegedly offered perks, such as champagne and promises of

foreign trips. The scheme came to light when the Consumer Institute of South Africa received complaints.

Supt Sterrenberg would not confirm the extent of the police investigation yesterday but it will run concurrent with an internal inquiry into officers' links with the British businessman.

Last year it was claimed that Mr Thatcher had hired reservist police officers wearing full uniform and using official-issue arms to guard his home in the smart Cape Town suburb of Constantia. Last year, a police radio was apparently found in the guardhouse of his home.

South African police are notoriously underpaid and there are frequent claims of officers engaging in corruption or taking second jobs to increase their incomes.

The newspaper reports claimed that, as of April, Mr Thatcher's company had a loan book of 2.2 million rands (£220,000), mostly owed by soldiers, police officers and civil servants. They said a company owned by Mr Thatcher, Matric Capital, was now trying to recover the money.

Mr Thatcher could not be reached yesterday but the newspapers quoted him as saying he felt he was offering a service at a reasonable rate. "People came to me. I was offering a 50 per cent discount on what was available," he said.

Mr Thatcher moved to Cape Town with his wife and two children after his US-based security alarm business failed three years ago.

'Bring in hounds' call as some mink head home

Geoffrey Gibbs

SOME OF the mink released from a Hampshire fur farm by animal rights activists at the weekend had by last night returned to the compound in search of food.

Terence Smith, owner of the Crow Hill fur farm raided by members of the Animal Liberation Front, said that around 2,500 of the 6,000 animals freed from the farm by the ALF had been recovered. Hundreds more have been shot by local farmers or run over on the roads.

Meanwhile, there were calls to bring in mink hounds to aid the quest.

A hotline set up yesterday by New Forest district council to handle the crisis was swamped by callers reporting sightings of the voracious creatures.

Council workers were taking around 20 calls an hour from homeowners who had

found the animals in wardrobes, greenhouses, and according to one caller, "playing in a paddling pool". The council is advising members of the public not to try to catch the animals and has arranged for pest control experts to trap or shoot the mink.

Most reported sightings have been in the Ringwood and Burley area, close to the fur farm from which the mink escaped. But more fanciful reports have put them in Southampton and Salisbury.

Wildlife experts say the mink could have a profound effect upon conservation of small mammals and water fowl in the area, and there is particular concern about the fate of Britain's most rapidly declining mammal, the water vole.

Hampshire contains one of the best remaining populations of the water vole in the UK, and conservationists warned yesterday it would be particularly vulnerable over the next few months when the

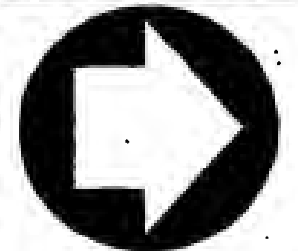
young are at large and adults are stocking up for the winter.

As the mink continued to spread across the New Forest, some locals were suggesting bringing a pack of mink hounds from Dorset to tackle the problem.

New Forest district council chief executive Ian Macintosh said the council had no powers to invite the mink hounds in because it was not the landowner in the area.

"What we really need is the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to take over the co-ordination and put together a considered overall plan. The mink are moving across the forest at a rate of knots."

John Sheldon, who lives near Crow Hill Farm, said he hated all hunting with dogs but on balance believed having the mink hounds would be a good thing. "We have to eradicate these mink before they devastate the wildlife of the forest."



"I've been a rogue and a bastard, but never vicious, I'd never have anything to do with the murder of anybody, least of all a kid."

Jimmy Robinson, one of the angry innocent

G2 p8

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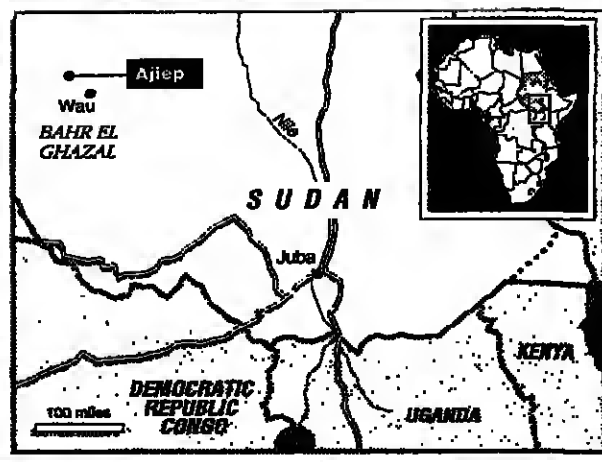
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These photographs were taken by Tom Stoddart of IPG at the Médecins Sans Frontières feeding station at Ajiep in southern Sudan. Anti-clockwise from top: A child looks pitifully at a local rich man who has just taken a bag of maize from him after hours spent waiting for the meagre aid supplies; two people gather as a body is brought unceremoniously for burial; a young child



Truce comes too late for unseen victims of Sudan's pitiless war

Victoria Brittain

A CEASEFIRE in Sudan's civil war has given new access to aid for thousands of desperate refugees.

The three-month truce between the Islamic government in Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Army has opened the airstrip at Ajiep in the south where people have gathered for months struggling to survive on inadequate airdrops.

But the aid has come too late for unknown thousands of other displaced people in many such rough, ill-equipped camps across the region.

Aid workers fear that the high death toll at Ajiep sug-

gests that many other camps are also in the grip of a catastrophe.

The refugees, mostly from generations of Dinka cattle-herding families, are the usually unseen victims of a pitiless war driven by regional and geo-political interests which go far beyond Sudan.

The US has declared Sudan a terrorist state, while neighbouring Eritrea, Ethiopia, and especially Uganda, have all been destabilised for years by Sudan's proxy armies.

The Dinka in Ajiep have lost their cattle, their villages, schools and clinics. They have been driven to walk for days, weeks or months, searching for food and fleeing a war waged against them from Khartoum by air and land.

Their traditional world of cattle camps, elaborate rituals and careful ornamentation is lost for ever.

The potential oil riches which might have brought them into the modern world are more remote than ever.

Elsewhere in the south a convoy of river barges carrying emergency food supplies began a six-week journey down the Nile.

"For many communities along the river, this barge is their only opportunity to get access to outside food and medical assistance," said Tesema Negash, the World Food Programme's deputy director for Africa.

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News in brief

Libyan rebels report killing security forces in Benghazi

LIBYAN insurgents have killed or wounded dozens of security force members since early July in attacks in and near the city of Benghazi, a leading Arabic-language newspaper Al Hayat quoted the fundamentalist Islamic Martyrs Movement as saying.

The mountains around Benghazi are believed to be a stronghold of the movement, which is seeking to overthrow Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and claimed responsibility for several attacks in the area in 1996.

In the first attack, on July 8, five named security agents and four insurgents were killed in Banihah, 11 miles east of Benghazi. Al Hayat said. A security force member and two militants were killed in subsequent clashes in Benghazi. In a fourth clash, three insurgents and about 20 security troops were killed or wounded in Misshah, about 100 miles east of Benghazi. Among the dead was the deputy commander of the insurgents' unit. — AP, Cairo.

France under remote control

FORMER president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing has criticised France's current leaders for going on foreign holidays without naming stand-ins.

Mr Giscard, head of state from 1974 to 1981, said yesterday that he was shocked that President Jacques Chirac and the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, were governing France remotely by an electronic communications system.

He said that this was the first time that the country's two leading administrators had been absent at the same time during the summer since Charles de Gaulle founded the Fifth Republic in 1958 and insisted that a leader was always on hand to handle a crisis.

Mr Chirac is in Mauritania and Mr Jospin is on a Greek island. But their staffs insisted that technology had advanced so much since Mr Giscard's days that France could be governed from abroad. — *Paul Webster, Paris*

More areas fall to the Taliban

The Taliban recorded more victories against Afghanistan's opposition forces yesterday. It captured Taloqan, the capital of the northern province of Takhar, from the opposition leader Ahmed Shah Massoud, and reported gains in the Shi'ite central province of Bamian. — *Reuters*

Killer gets life

Ukrainian immigrant Mikhail Markhasov, aged 20, was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole yesterday for killing the American come-

dian Bill Cosby's son, Ennis, writes Christopher Reed.

Burma visits

Diplomats were allowed yesterday to visit 18 foreigners detained in Burma for handing out leaflets criticising the country's military regime. No decision has yet been taken on whether they will be tried. — AP

Cycle of crime

A 68-year-old Japanese man has been charged with 5,000 burglaries. The police accused him of peddling his bicycle across the country for the past nine years on the look-out for easy break-ins. — AP

Secession vote falls short

ABOLD independence drive by the tiny Caribbean island of Nevis failed yesterday when 62 per cent of its population voted to secede from a federation with the neighbouring island of St Kitts. The seven-mile-long island, home to 9,000 people, needed 67 per cent of voters to support secession for the move to succeed.

Some voters said they had

been dissuaded from voting Yes in the hastily called referendum because no one had explained what would happen if they seceded. "The uncertainty increased over the weekend. The people began to wrestle with reality," said Kofi Adams, a farmer.

The outcome frustrated a years-old independence drive by the premier of Nevis, Vance Amory. — AP



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An artist works on a sand sculpture of Brussels' Atomium structure on the beach at Zeebrugge yesterday. Fifty European sculptors are building replicas of monuments from four Belgian cities during a three-week festival, using 180,000 cubic feet of sand

US hails role of Kenyan guards in bomb attack

Gary Young in Washington

SHORTLY before the bomb exploded at the American embassy in Nairobi on Friday, five men opened fire on security guards and launched a hand grenade attack, witnesses say.

The men, who were in the lorry carrying the bomb, were stopped by guards at the barrier to the embassy's front car park and made to turn around and park at the rear of the building.

The attackers, described by a guard as "Arab-looking", then jumped out of their vehicle and started shooting. At least one United States marine returned fire before one of the attackers threw a hand-

grenade. Moments later the truck exploded, a guard told Kenyan television.

The damage could cost up to \$312 million, the Kenyan president, Daniel arap Moi, said yesterday as he toured the scene of the blast for the third time since Friday.

US government and congressional sources say two attacks on American embassies were foiled at an advanced stage of planning last year and three less developed plots were disrupted by the Central Intelligence Agency.

The Washington Post said the intended targets had not been named to avoid alerting terrorists to US intelligence-gathering.

The state department's deputy spokesman, James Foley, described a Kenyan security

guard a hero for refusing to open a gate into the embassy compound even when grenades were thrown at him.

Another US official said there would have been many more casualties had the guards not acted as they did.

"They saved people's lives by sending the lorry around back," he said.

"If they hadn't done that, I don't think I would be around today."

Other witnesses said they heard a small blast before the big explosion. US officials in Nairobi decline to comment.

Meanwhile the Tanzanian police said they had arrested 14 foreigners in connection with the simultaneous bombing of the US embassy in Dar es Salaam.

The death toll from the two

bombs has reached more than 220.

In Kenya 211 bodies have been recovered. A senior Kenyan army officer said at least six more bodies could be seen in the ruins.

The Dar es Salaam attack killed 10 people and wounded about 75.

American medical and forensic experts, who have poured into the area, have been joined by specialists from Britain, South Africa, Israel, France and Germany, but hopes are fading of finding many more people alive under the rubble.

An Israeli soldier said rescuers were hoping to pull out one survivor, known only as Rose, who has been trapped in the ruins for more than 100 hours.

Only when the rescue operation has been completed can forensic investigations get fully under way.

Six Iraqis, six Sudanese, a Somali and a Turk are being held in connection with the bombing, although it is not yet clear what they are individually suspected of.

The 12 Americans who died were all victims of the Nairobi attack. Relatives of one, who was married to a Kenyan, have decided to bury her in her adopted country.

The other 11 are on their way home from Germany in a US transport plane. President Bill Clinton plans to cut short a fund-raising trip to the West and mid-West to be at Andrews airbase near Washington tomorrow to meet them.

Polish U-turn on field of crosses

Neil Bowdler in Warsaw

THE head of the Polish Catholic Church has acted unexpectedly to ease growing international tension over a burgeoning field of crosses outside the former Auschwitz concentration camp.

Cardinal Jozef Glamp said in a statement that the dispute now had little to do with Christian faith, and called on Catholic activists to stop setting more crosses near the former camp's perimeter, branding those involved "irresponsible".

This was followed yesterday by an interview with Vatican radio in which the primate emphasised the need for calm and a sober appraisal of the issue. He held out the prospect of a solution being discussed at a meeting of the Polish episcopacy later this month.

The comments mark a climb-down by the cardinal, who reacted with bitterness last week to a call from the Israeli government for the crosses to be removed.

He then attributed the growing dispute to "continual molestation from the Jewish side" and resented foreign inter-

ference in what was, he said, a sovereign matter.

Dozens of crosses have been placed on a grassy bank outside the former camp in recent weeks by a group pledged to defending a 28ft wooden cross used during a 1979 papal mass and brought to its present location in the late 1980s.

The group is led by Kazimierz Switon, an anti-communist veteran known for his anti-Semitic views, who recently ended a 42-day hunger strike in defence of the cross.

His stated aim is for 152 crosses to adorn the site, one for each Polish victim of a war-

time execution at the site by Nazi soldiers. His group said yesterday it was considering the cardinal's appeal and would give its official response today.

Even if no more crosses are placed, there remains the issue of what to do with those already at the site. The main body of the Catholic Church in Poland and rightwing politicians remain implacably opposed to the uprooting of the papal cross, and are unlikely to accept what they view as an edict from Jerusalem.

To them, the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex is as much a part of Poland's leg-

acy of national martyrdom as it is the Jewish community's, and they believe Christian symbols have as much right to stand there as any where on Polish soil. World Jewry maintains that there should be no religious or ideological symbols at or near the complex, where some 1.5 million people perished, most of them Jews.

Tension could escalate with the expected arrival of the radical New York rabbi Avi Weiss, known in Poland for his personal protests at the former presence of a Carmelite order of nuns near the Auschwitz perimeter.

The decision was welcomed by Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, as a significant breakthrough for UN disarmament talks designed to lead to a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, prohibiting the production of plutonium and highly enriched uranium for nuclear weapons.

India and Pakistan have hitherto linked talks on such a treaty to wider negotiations on nuclear disarmament, and if it had included the threat to attack US interests, it would have been engaged in the production of up to 300 bombs.

Dimona's facilities were exposed by Mohammed Salah's Cairo office started humming last Wednesday and out slipped a single sheet of paper warning of dire consequences for the Great Satan.

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Montenegro defies Serbian pleas for help in Kosovo

Jonathan Steele in Podgorica

THE Montenegrin government has defied the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, by refusing to reinforce the overstretched Serb militia as they continue their slash-and-burn advance through Kosovo.

Montenegro is the only republic in the Yugoslav federation besides Serbia and it has adopted an increasingly independent line since Milo Djukanovic defeated Belgrade's favourite to become president last year. His party went on to win parliamentary elections in May.

Mr Milosevic asked Vukasin Maras, the republic's interior minister, for the reinforcements during a meeting last week at the height of the joint Yugoslav army and Serb police offensive in Kosovo, a Montenegrin government adviser disclosed yesterday.

The adviser said: "We refused. Milosevic doesn't understand that you cannot win a war if you commit war crimes."

"You simply create new soldiers who join the opposing side to avenge their families."

The latest offensive has driven more than 100,000 ethnic Albanians from their homes, largely through heavy artillery fire.

Diplomats, aid workers, and journalists have seen troops and police looting and setting fire to dozens of empty houses and shops.

Although Mr Maras promised the Yugoslav leader that Montenegro would not allow arms supplies to cross its long border to the independence fighters, his refusal to supply them has been a major factor in the new Montenegrin leadership and Belgrade's decision to appoint the defeated former Montenegrin president Momir Bulatovic as Yugoslav prime minister.

Now the Montenegrin government is boycotting all meetings with Mr Bulatovic and refusing to accept many of his rulings. When the Yugoslav trade minister issued



Hostility towards Slobodan Milosevic (left) has helped the Montenegrin leader, Milo Djukanovic, mobilise support

day, and seven more were wounded yesterday.

Montenegro's defiance of its much larger federal partner is a delicate business. It recognises that the Yugoslav army has a duty to defend the federation's borders. But when the Yugoslav army recently extended the security zone along the Albanian border three miles back from the frontier, Montenegro asked for an exemption. Otherwise parts of the Adriatic city of Ulcinj, which it hopes to revive for tourism, will be under army control.

The request was granted. Similarly, a statement from the Montenegrin parliament that conscripts from the small republic should not be asked to fight in Kosovo appears to be being respected.

One official in Podgorica, the capital, said: "They realise there's no sense in giving guns to people who do not care whether Kosovo stays with Serbia."

The formal bone of contention between the new Montenegrin leadership and Belgrade is Mr Milosevic's decision to appoint the defeated former Montenegrin president Momir Bulatovic as Yugoslav prime minister.

Now the Montenegrin government is boycotting all meetings with Mr Bulatovic and refusing to accept many of his rulings. When the Yugoslav trade minister issued

lucrative licences for oil imports last week, the Montenegrin government issued new ones to rival businessmen.

Although the struggle between Mr Djukanovic and Mr Bulatovic is partly a rivalry of two elites for state power, attitudes to Mr Milosevic are a potent element in mobilising the public.

The Djukanovic camp represents the disaffected, including many younger Montenegrins who want more contact with the West and blame Mr Milosevic for isolating Yugoslavia.

"Milosevic is a problem-creator, not a problem-solver," said Radomir Sekulovic, a consultant for the information secretariat.

"He asked Montenegrins to join in the war against Croatia so as to save Yugoslavia. We fought hard but clean. But when he suddenly declared a new rump Yugoslavia in April 1992, our soldiers were outside its borders. That meant they were declared as aggressors, and not one wounded Serbian gets any money from Belgrade. That was the psychological origin of the break with Milosevic."

Now refugees from Mr Milosevic's war in Kosovo are concerning Montenegrins. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says about 28,000 have arrived this year, adding almost 5 per cent to the republic's population.

Israel clears the way for wider nuclear talks

Richard Norton-Taylor

ISRAEL joined India and Pakistan yesterday in lifting its long-standing veto on international negotiations to end the production of fissile materials used for nuclear bombs.

The decision was welcomed by Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, as a significant breakthrough for UN disarmament talks designed to lead to a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, prohibiting the production of plutonium and highly enriched uranium for nuclear weapons.

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Al Hayat, published in London, is owned by a Saudi prince

Fax to newspaper warned of threat to 'Great Satan'

David Pallister

THE FAX machine in Mohammed Salah's Cairo office started humming last Wednesday and out slipped a single sheet of paper warning of dire consequences for the Great Satan.

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closed in Beirut in 1978 during the civil war) he has invested about \$125 million in the newspaper.

Last Friday, after the bombing of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, Mr Salah had a call from a man who asked if the paper had published Wednesday's communiqué and if it had included the threat to attack US interests. "We have axed our threat," he said.

Later the fax machine churned out a three-page message in ornate Arabic claiming responsibility for the bombings under the name of the Army of Liberation of the Islamic Holy Places. It demanded, as ever, US withdrawal from the Gulf and the lifting of embargoes against Arab states — presumably a reference to Libya and Iraq.

The message also called for the release of Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind Muslim cleric imprisoned in the US, and two fundamentalist sheikhs in prison in Saudi Arabia.

Sensitive to Saudi feelings — the country is the willing host of US troops — the paper held off publishing the message until Monday, and then only a condensed version. Crucially, the word "Islamic" was removed from the group's name, in deference to the fact that King Fahd is supposed to be the guardian of the holy places Mecca and Medina, and not an oppressor.

Mr Salah is convinced the claim was genuine. If he is right, then the explosions in East Africa were as much aimed at the Saudi regime as at the Americans.

online

Every Thursday in the

INTERNATIONAL
The Guardian

Comment

Diary

Simon Bowers

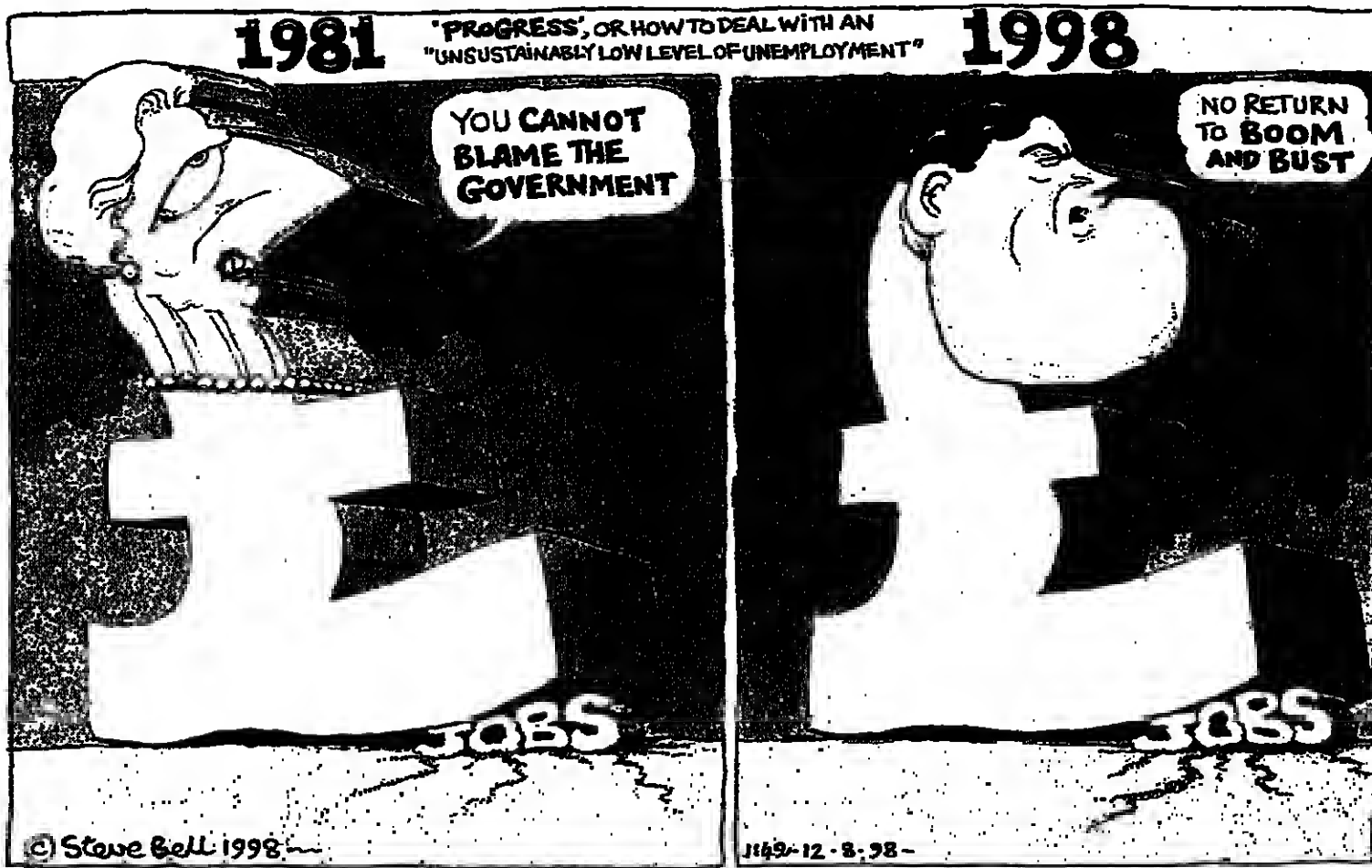
FOLLOWING last week's shocking revelation that Derek Draper is no longer a "lad", another stalwart of laddism seems ready to defect. This week's Radio Times brings worrying news of our critic Jeremy Clarkson, who appears to be suffering a crisis of confidence. "Of course, if I was a cyclist living in Devon and wanting a quiet life I'd find myself very of fensive," he confesses. "Occasionally I meet Guardian or Observer readers who see me as the Devil incarnate because I seem to champion speed and recklessness." Not so, it's all in your mind Jeremy. "I don't mind people writing to tell me I'm stupid or ill-informed, but I wouldn't like to come face to face with them. I'm a bit shy really." Please, you're breaking our heart. There are touches of the old magic when on the subject of his beloved Ferrari — it's like "a quail's egg dipped in celery salt served in Julia Roberts's belly button" — but the gloom soon returns. "I'm a bit of a bannister holding on to the bannister walking downstairs." We put in a courtesy call to inquire after his health but Jeremy is unavailable. Instead his wife (and manager), Françoise, is "unable to come to the phone" that Jeremy's behaviour has been timid of late. "If he thinks he is timid, then that is what he thinks."

THE recent anti-laddism outburst by Dennis Haskins, founder of the think tank, has been dismissed in some uncharitable diary columns as personally motivated. However, we have learnt of a retreat being planned by a group of young male MPs in Shropshire next month, devoted exclusively to the study of laddism. Intriguingly, all 12 will be kicked out in Labour Party colours at the Lilleshall Human Performance Centre — except for Nick Hawkins, Tory MP for Surrey Heath.

WITH Alastair Campbell's recent chilling warning to journalists to keep a cool head through the quiet month of August ringing in our ears, the Diary has been fastidious in its avoidance of trivia. Indeed, then, the headline Chancellor Goes For A £135 "Barber Boom" appeared anywhere other than the Times we would have given it short shrift. However given the self-evident newsworthiness of the story it would be negligent of us not to explore the central issues at play. Is this cut a direct challenge to Mr Blair's Caesar look? How will the PM respond to this style salvo in the ongoing turf war between the two? We called Labour's former make-over man Barbara Follett for comment, but were surprised to hear the Stevenage MP is on holiday. Anna Ward, her spokeswoman, surprised as further. "There's absolutely no point contacting Barbara on holiday to ask about such a thing," she says. "I can confidently say she doesn't comment on image things."

PC Mick Claxton of Beverley police station in Humberside has shown the kind of deductive aptitude which could win him this month's PC Brains award. The puzzling case presented itself, reports Police magazine, in the form of a take-away pizza at the station's enquiry desk. This was not out of the ordinary. Lacking any canteen facilities, officers regularly ordered take-away meals. What was mysterious about this particular pizza was that no order had been placed — a fact contested by the irate delivery man until PC Claxton pointed out that, while he was an officer of the law, the station's address was not The Copse, Beverley.

ASURVEY of MPs by Virgin Direct asks for novel, money-saving tips. "Think ahead. Look after tomorrow today," says Ashok Kumar (Lab, Mid-Devonshire South). Charles Clarke (Lab, Norwich South) suggests "paying bills fast". "Buy property, get a Pep or something tax-free," says Billericay's Teresa Gorman (Con). With an eye on the bigger picture, however, Adrian Sanders (Lib Dem, Torbay) advises against "buying pedal bin liners. Use free supermarket shopping bags."



Let's learn from Snappy – and turn past horrors into a better future

Jonathan Freedland



JUST a dog in a vest, he's now an international hero. Who could resist the sight of little Snappy, a German Shepherd scrambling and chasing across the rubble, ears cocked for the sound of a human voice, nostrils trembling for the scent of life? Snappy's adventure has made compelling drama, with TV viewers across the globe transfixed as he and his fellow rescuers dig for survivors of the Nairobi bomb, which shredded more than 200 lives last Friday morning. With microphones and solar equipment, they have listened for the living; with blowtorches and drills they have found three of them. They have more specialist gear than you can imagine — down to inflatable pillows for lifting off dangerously positioned pieces of rubble (insert, then inflate). They have picked up voices, faint tapping noises — anything which might be a sign of life.

The unfolding saga of the rescue operation has been an unexpected point of light in what should have been an unrelentingly bleak story. We have witnessed carnage and despair on an horrific scale, of course — but also the human determination to stay alive, against all odds. Most surprising, we have seen a glimpse of life beyond war — of how small nations bruised by conflict and shunned by the rest of the world can convert their own, ostracised past into a very different future.

The nation in question is the one whose flag little Snappy is wearing on his back: Israel. The 150 men, women and dogs of the Israeli home front command's rescue unit were the first team into Nairobi, and they have been lauded as heroes ever since. They rushed straight from the

airport — and armed with years of unwanted experience — set to work. Within two minutes they had found their first survivor. Reporters have marvelled at the speed and alacrity of the yellow-helmeted Israeli team, who turned around what had been a humiliating defeat. While the Americans were accused of flailing standing around, the Israelis have worked around the clock. The Tel Aviv media has crowed that while the US emergency squads are staying in Nairobi's poshest hotels, the Israeli boys and girls are bedding down at the scene — in sleeping bags.

There is no shortage of possible motives for Israel's generosity. For one thing, Snappy and his masters are handing the battered administration of Benjamin Netanyahu its greatest PR boost since Dana International won the Eurovision song contest — and that was a mixed blessing. They have been Israel's best possible ambassadors, successfully outperforming the stiffly suave Mr Netanyahu. While he was offering the usual gaseous soundbites on terrorism, 29-year-old Gil Weiser was burrowing through tangled steel and masonry to reach Francis Ngũgĩ, who had been buried for 36 hours under rubble. Weiser went to Nairobi hospital on Sunday to deliver flowers to the man whose life he'd saved. He sat at his bedside, holding his hand.

Scenes like that have allowed Israel to give good CNN, but they have also sent a clear message: in the battle against terror the West should have no doubt where it stands. Jerusalem wants the US, Britain and the others to remember: the Jewish state is on the side of the

good guys. There have been other benefits for the Israelis, besides an image makeover. They have managed to settle a 22-year debt, repaying the Kenyans who allowed Israel to land its planes in Nairobi following the legendary 1976 raid on Entebbe. Snappy, Boris, Rick and Max (to name but three others from the canine unit) have also done wonders for the internal morale of the Israeli military, which has been shaken in recent months by a series of lethal accidents and air crashes.

Some of this is bound to have weighed in Bibi's thinking as he placed that early condolence call to President Clinton and Daniel Arafat. Still, cynicism does not tell the whole story. For what the Israeli operation in Kenya represents is a small, symbolic victory for an alternative vision of the Jewish state, and of the creed which founded it.

YOSSI BEILIN, the leader of the dovish wing of the Israeli Labour Party and one of the architects of the Oslo peace accord, is fond of imagining the role of a post-war Israel. When I spoke to him for Israel's 50th anniversary earlier this year, he looked forward to the time when his country would "take part in peacekeeping forces around the world, working in Africa, becoming a bridge between the First and Third World." He envisaged Israel growing out of its martial past — but drawing strength from it. As a nation blooded by war, it could help others avert it and deal with its consequences — just as it's doing in Kenya.

At the heart of that vision was Zionism as the founding fathers wanted it to be: a

movement which would allow the Jewish people to join the family of nations, not withdraw from it. Left-wing Zionists have always resented the nationalist right of Netanyahu and the Likud for turning Israel into a parish state. The whole point of Zionism, they argue, was to take Jews out of the ghetto and into the human race.

That's why progressive Jews are so moved by the sight of those nimble dogs wearing the Star of David on their backs, handled by burly men in yellow headgear: the last time those symbols appeared together was in the yellow star imposed on Jews by the Nazis. Now, the search team in Kenya seems to say, a change is possible: victims can become rescuers.

This humane brand of Zionism is a minority belief in today's Israel. Not many Israelis speak of the founding conviction that a Jewish State could be, in the language of the Bible, a "light unto the nations". But Yossi Beilin is sure that Israel had a chance to evolve into this enlightened, internationalist force for good — if only the peace process of Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres had not been stopped dead by an assassin's bullet.

For the rest of us, it may not be too late. Other national movements can also strive to join the world, not turn their back on it. South African jurists and clerics will surely be welcome in countries anxious for truth and reconciliation. The Royal Ulster Constabulary will be warmly received wherever bombers are wreaking havoc. Like Snappy and his friends, they have experienced horrors in their past. They don't have to forget them — they can convert them into a better future.

Pinta pointer

Sheila McKechnie



THE Department of Health's handling of the milk safety issue is a good example of a new wind-sweeping through Whitehall. The message to consumers is clear. New evidence about a possible problem with Mycobacterium Paratuberculosis in milk means that new research is needed to investigate it in depth. The department acted quickly to advise the public that there is no need to change consumption of milk, but in the meantime government scientists would be asked to keep the situation under review.

But it hasn't always been this way. Whilst the perception is that government has probably just about got it right this time, you can almost hear them holding their breath. How will consumers react to this latest food scare? If consumers cut their consumption of milk, the comforting conclusion will be drawn by those in the "don't tell" faction — that it's best to go back to the good old days where secrets were safe from the prying eyes of media and public and the interests of industry could be protected from panic by keeping the information behind closed doors.

But is secrecy still a serious option? The problem with secrecy and half-truths is that they infantilise consumers — rendering the public childlike in their take on risk, and creating a climate where consumers are encouraged to have unrealistic expectations about food safety and government responsibility.

WE have come to expect absolute safety, and inevitably when that appears not to be the case, then we tend to assume the worst. Consumers, often led by the media, move from one extreme to another in an unbalanced reaction, making sensible risk assessment virtually impossible. In this unbalanced system, consumers have been stranded without adequate education about risk, and so it is hardly surprising that many have little understanding of how to interpret scientific information to make clear, calm judgments about food.

Developing a more grown-up approach requires systematic and continual openness from government. We are in a transitional phase in the development of risk communication, and there are bound to be ups and downs until systems are in place that can effectively investigate and report potential food hazards in a simple, concise and trustworthy manner. Just as babies grow into difficult adolescents, the public may initially over-react when absorbing facts it would rather not hear. We have no choice but to go down this route if we want to reach a more adult approach to decision-making.

The consumer is just as capable of making an assessment as the scientist. Withholding information until absolutely forced to reveal it created havoc with BSE and a crisis of confidence in Government regulation that has yet to be abated.

Food seems particularly accident-prone. The risks from eating beef on the bone, raw eggs, soft cheeses, unpasteurised milk, vitamin B6 and genetically modified food have severely challenged governments, who have found themselves coming under increasing pressure to legitimise their handling of food risks, whether by way of defending inaction or justifying precaution.

But is our food mad, bad and dangerous to eat, or have the risks been over-stated? There are some good reasons for believing that what we've been reacting to is real. Changes in food production since the war have meant the food chain is longer than it once was. Food is now subjected to a variety of processes which make it safer (pasteurisation is a good and timely example) but paradoxically more vulnerable to bugs, toxins and contamination.

There are real underlying and endemic problems with the way food is produced and the succession of food scares has taken its toll. Our confidence in the safety of what we eat has been shaken, but more importantly, we no longer trust the powers that be to regulate on our behalf.

Public confidence in government won't be restored until we've got a body that commands respect and cred-

We need a one stop shop for food safety — sooner rather than later

ibility, and is genuinely independent.

The arguments for an independent food standards agency were based on the need for a body with consumer interests at the top of its agenda, without being compromised by the interests of industry or the political considerations of the day. This Government has promised consumers an agency capable of undertaking its own research and communicating its findings openly and directly with consumers — a one stop shop for food safety.

However, despite a promise to place its manifesto, we hear that Labour might delay the setting up of an independent food agency. The lesson of this latest food problem is that whilst scares may come and go, the agency is needed sooner rather than later.

Sheila McKechnie is director of the Consumers' Association

Our two national theatre companies eat up half the country's drama subsidy. But what do we get from them? Cowboys on parade

Oh no. Not Oklahoma!

Michael Billington

AUGUST, I know, represents the dog-days. It also seems to have become the dog-eat-dog days. One fellow-lackey describes as "pompous idiots" all those of us who dare to question Oklahoma's suitability for the National Theatre. What really worries me is what the show symbolises: not just the sense of lowered expectations on the part of critics, audiences and artists, but also that our two national companies are currently driven by a cautious pragmatism. Created in the 1960s as a radical alternative to a complacent commercial theatre, they now seem to mimic rather than question West End values.

A National Theatre's function should be to present a balanced mix of world

classics and new plays in a rotating repertoire with the aid of a permanent company; in other words, to do precisely what the West End can't. But at the moment it is fulfilling one of those conditions. Its programme this month admittedly with the Cottesloe stage closed — comprises Oklahoma plus The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie and a Dublin import, Tarriff Flynn.

I am told that Nunn had a much more ambitious programme planned for his first full year at the National: even Oklahoma was scheduled to play in rep with Romeo and Juliet. Not his plans were scrapped, or drastically modified, when he was told they would produce a £2 million deficit. Pragmatism finally won out over principle. If he'd at least done the programme he originally wanted, he would have

proved to the Government that the National, in fulfilling its artistic brief, was unsustainably funded.

But if the National currently looks a shadow of the organisation created by Olivier, Hall and Eyre, what are we to make of the RSC? This winter it stages a separate Stratford season

They should present world classics and new plays in repertory

of seemingly detachable productions including a Richard III, starring Robert Lindsay, that goes on tour and then into the West End, and The School for Scandal. It then offers a spring and summer season of repertory Shakespeare.

Clearly this is an admission by Adrian Noble that his policy of re-structuring the Stratford season to start in October has failed.

Again, it is possible to have some sympathy with Noble working under heavy financial constraints. But, by temporarily withdrawing from the Barbican, he has made people question the whole notion of the RSC's London presence. He has also failed to come up with the kind of Big Idea that in the past has not only sustained the RSC but often got it out of financial and artistic trouble. The Wars of The Roses, The Greeks, Nicholas Nickleby are classic examples. What, I recently asked a young director, would you do with the RSC? His answer was to present all Shakespeare's plays in chronological sequence over a five or six-year period. Immediately one saw the imaginative po-

tential of an idea that would give clarity and purpose to the RSC.

Both our national companies have turned into cautious, conservative institutions intent on pragmatic survival. If one seeks flair and imagination, one has to

turn elsewhere. To the Almeida in London which, with its upcoming productions of Racine, Brecht, Albee and Hare, not to mention its outstanding work on O'Neill and Pirandello, is currently fulfilling the role of the National



Theatre. To the Royal Court, whose new-play programme is the envy of Europe and the world.

To the West Yorkshire Playhouse, which this autumn is setting up a repertory company led by Ian McKellen. And to Manchester's Royal Exchange, which has announced a stunning programme of classics and new plays to take it up to the year 2000. As someone who remembers what our theatre was like before the advent of the National and the RSC, I am not advocating their demise. I am saying that they currently lack vision and imagination, and that, unless Messrs Nunn and Noble can rediscover them, they will soon call into question both the separate identity of their organisations and the fact that they consume roughly half the allocated subsidy for drama in this country.

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Sudanese horrors

We must face up to them

MANY OF our readers will find the pictures of famine in Southern Sudan which we publish today deeply distressing. Some may feel that this is a visual invasion of privacy which should not be allowed. Others may wonder whether such appeals to our consciences are not just a short-term palliative: is there not a better way to tackle human disaster — made by humans — of such a catastrophic scale?

These are difficult questions involving both judgement and principle, but in the meantime we are absolutely sure of the need to jolt both public and governments into greater awareness. The war-made famine in Southern Sudan is one of the world's greatest catastrophes: nearly two million have already died from fighting and consequent famine in the past decade and a half. The UN World Food Programme says that 1.2 million more people are at risk of death from hunger this summer. In Atje, where these photographs were taken, people are living on the leaves of trees. Food supply by UN planes does not meet half the demand. At least one child dies in the feeding centre a day. It is as much hell on earth as a battlefield, a concentration camp, or the scene of ethnic genocide.

Southern Sudan has always been a harsh dry place to live in and the climate has worsened in recent years. It is expensive and difficult to send in emergency supplies and even more so to begin to rebuild a devastated agricultural infrastructure.

But the root cause of the famine is not the weather or the remoteness. It is the pitiless war conducted by the Khartoum regime towards the people of the sub-Saharan South who have never been regarded as equal citizens. The southern cause is not a shining one: local warlords steal aid supplies and inflict more misery on the civilian population. Yet the situation has to be dealt with as it is, not in some ideal framework.

Western countries are certainly not friends of the radical Islamic regime in Khartoum, but most humanitarian aid is channelled through arrangements which allow it ultimate veto power. This is partly out of deference to the formal requirements of respect for "national sovereignty." It is also, less explicitly, because the US and other countries fear that increased rebel activity in the south — encouraged by large-scale food aid — could lead to the fragmentation of Sudan, causing further geopolitical upheavals in the region. These arguments should pale into nothingness when set against the immense suffering of so many people. They are crying out of hunger, collapsing from weakness, dying without even a patch of shade: they should get far more aid, and get it directly.

We have not published the worst photographs taken at Atje. One shows a woman crouched on her knees in the earth, giving birth as a friend supports her from behind. A dead man with protruding eye sockets lies a few feet away. There are pictures of live children seemingly as thin as sticks, and of a dead child being buried in a tiny hole in the sand. There is no denying that there are limits to what can be shown visually: in some cases words may convey the message more effectively. But the assault on consciences has to be made by one means or another. The international development secretary Clare Short had a point

recently when she argued that one-off appeals for aid — and she was referring to Southern Sudan — may divert attention from the wider issues which must be dealt with. But it is precisely to focus attention upon the war and the policies which cause more people to die that there must be more pictures, more words and more protest. The people who are dying in Atje and many other places cannot wait till another way of tackling human disaster has been found.

Milk tests

Reveal even remote risks

HAS THE pendulum swung too far? Is the traditional trappist approach to Irish milk decision-making in danger of becoming too open? New research has disclosed a remote possibility that pasteurised milk could contain bacteria that might cause Crohn's disease — a stomach disorder involving cramps, sickness and diarrhoea which can produce ulcers and tumours in the bowel. Currently, scientists assess the risk of infection in drinking a glass of pasteurised milk at one in five million. Yet, contrary to earlier procedures, officials disclosed this week that they would be conducting a nationwide survey on the quality of milk. Preliminary tests in 16 dairies in Northern Ireland have found six batches containing the bacteria. Until now, research has suggested the organism is destroyed by pasteurisation. Further studies obviously are now needed. But did the public need to be told when health officials remain convinced that it is safe to continue to drink pasteurised milk?

Stand by while all the old arguments are aired: the complexity of science, the highly technical nature of risk analysis, the expense of providing the full facts to Joe

Public who will suffer unnecessary anxiety in the struggle to understand the information. If ignorance is bliss, why frighten the horses? Compared to the one in 9,000 risk of dying while driving a car each year or the one in two chance of premature death that smokers face, a one in five million chance of a stomach disorder is surely something individuals could safely ignore.

But Whitehall does not know best. Expert advisers do not have a monopoly of wisdom. Democratic societies should treat their citizens with more respect. BSE illustrates the twin errors which officials are prone to make: the early paternalist mindset under which vital information was withheld on the grounds the public was not mature enough to handle the information; and the later over-protective approach in which beef on the bone was banned even though only three out of 2.2 million cows due to be slaughtered this year run the risk of being a hazard. The new openness about milk should be applauded. People should be given the facts but left to decide whether they want to take the risk. The public would be in a better position if there were agreement on the definition of risk. The Chief Medical Officer has set out a range from serious (one in 100) to negligible (one in a million). They also need an independent body they can trust. Let there be no further delay in setting up the food standards agency.

Mata martyr?

M15 fell for her charms

SHE LED, by any measure, an extraordinarily colourful life and it's no wonder Mata Hari (Margaretha or Margarete MacLeod née Zelle) continues to attract attention. Not

quite a feminist icon — she enjoyed strip-tease and champagne and the harem life a bit too much — she has none the less deserved the attentions of the revisionists. The victim of a bad marriage and for years effectively a single mother, at the age of 40 she did the modern thing and reinvented herself, becoming a gatherer of intelligence flitting between First World War capitals.

How much she ever knew about military dispositions is uncertain; you could probably pick up as much from spotting shoulder flashes in a Parisian pilsner as sleeping with the military attaché. What we know is that the ultimate femme fatale made no secrets of her movements (all that luggage!) and British military intelligence had her in their grasp more than once. And let her go. In terms of the conduct of the war, it probably made no difference. Mata Hari was eventually shot less for spying on behalf of the Germans than to protect the position of Captain Ladoux, the French counter-intelligence chief who had tried to run her as a double-agent — the fact she was able to describe him to the British convinced them she was what she said.

It's a fascinating tale. But once again it raises the question why utterly innocuous historical files such as these have been kept under lock and key so long. There are, apparently, "intelligence" files from the nineteenth century which have still not yet been released. Quite why the 30 year rule — restrictive enough — which applies to other government paperwork should not apply to the secret world has never been adequately explained, leaving the suspicion a la Shylock that the intelligence services have more to conceal. It's fun to learn of Mata Hari's interrogation at the hands of the straight-backed men of embryonic MI5 in 1916 but why the disclosure took so long remains a mystery.

Letters to the Editor

A flood of family memories

WOULD like to reassure Tom Bussman (Zeitgeist, August 8) that my parents received a tin of coffee from the emperor Haile Selassie in 1953. I was not born at the time but was brought up to the story of my parents and older brothers fleeing the flood in Hecham, Norfolk. My Dad always wished that he had kept the tin which had "a gift from Haile Selassie" on it, but he had a lot of other things on his mind at the time. Alison Ash, Sturminster Newton.

HAVE no wish to comment on Gus Macdonald's espousal of New Labour values. People do change. I do however want to support Paul Foot's defence (August 11) of the remarkable socialist Harry McShane, who to the end of his life was incapable, intellectually or emotionally, of accepting free market values. While he refused to join any political party he continued to the end to describe himself as a Marxist Humanist. Ray Carmichael, Glasgow.

NOTHING is really new. Julie Birchall has not uncovered a new sexual perversion (Letters, August 11): the expression "men will do it with mud" was used in the Sixties by Lennie Bruce and recorded on his Berkeley Concert album. Derek Kingston, London.

YOUR report on the court case involving theft of locomotives and rolling stock (August 11) will have been read with emotions ranging from amusement to incredulity. Yet this crime is not unique. I was once part-owner of a whole fleet of locomotives and carriages. A previous government took them from me and sold them off at way below their market value. However, no charges were ever brought against those responsible. Brian P. Moss, Tamworth, Staffs.

READ with confusion your correspondent's complaint (Letters, August 11) about the invading cold freezing his ardour. What's he moaning about? Am I alone in holding to the old belief, the ardour the better? Jason McEntyre, Liverpool.

GREAT idea, the "changing face of feminism" series. Just a pity it had to start with Elizabeth Wurtzel's bizarre manifesto (Get a girl, August 10). And it's not even new. Miss Bingley in Pride and Prejudice (1813) beat her to it: "A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages — and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions." Exactly. Who needs equal pay when you can have...? Delia Smith, Elizabeth Mahoney, Glasgow.

The NEC feud (cont.)

MANY longstanding Labour activists will welcome your endorsement of the centre-left Grassroots Alliance slate of candidates for the NEC as a much-needed positive ginger group. The knee-jerk reaction of such ardent supporters of New Labour as Leon Rodin (Letters, August 11) is entirely predictable; policy must be ruthlessly reshaped to keep the middle England vote at all costs and anyone who does not conform to the new orthodoxy must be rubbished as a neo-militant. Like Mr Rodin, I worked for the Labour Party, not for 10 years but for more like 50, but I have been sickened by its intolerance since it has gained power. The need for a credible dissenting voice at top table is urgent and the alliance slate could provide it. Tom Egan, Southport, Merseyside.

YESTERDAY'S correspondents may not care that at least one of their protégés broke party rules, and sent their NEC promotion directly into members' homes using labels provided for the European elections. And it's odd that five other NEC candidates, nominated by many constituencies in good faith, pulled out at the last moment allegedly because Millbank made them. It told to jump, the only question these people will ask is "How high?" I want to see people on the NEC who will enforce the rules, and who will tell the leadership what they need to know, not what they want to hear. Labour will only win further terms if it truly listens to its members. That's why I'll be voting for Andy Howell, Pete Willsman, Mark Seddon, Cathy Jamieson, Liz Davies and Christine Shawcroft.

Personally I've always been on the right of my local party, and a loyal supporter of my MP, Andrew Smith, and the Labour government. Like Tom Watson I've rolled up my sleeves to get Labour elected in good times and bad. I don't need sanctimonious lectures from anyone. Ann Black, Oxford.

I WOULD not insult Labour Party members by implying they are likely to vote for a certain NEC slate on the Guardian's say-so, but as you have published those names I would like to draw readers' attention to two genuinely independent NEC candidates: Mary Southcott (Georgina) who has done more for the cause of electoral reform than anyone living (or dead) and Val Price, the backbone of Labour Women's Network, who has helped so many women make progress. Both are former parliamentary candidates and have worked tirelessly for the party in good times and bad. They will make a very constructive contribution on the NEC. Lynne Armstrong, Portsmouth, Hants.

THE Guardian has taken a giant step from critical friend of the first Labour Government for 18 years to outright opposition by suggesting support for the so-called "centre-left Grassroots Alliance". These are the people who took Labour down the dark alley of opposition, factionalism and navel-gazing of the late 70s and early 80s. A vote for them will be a step back into the dark-ages of opposition. Labour is not a debating society, it is a party of government, and NEC elections deserve to be treated as seriously.

as an election can be, not as an academic exercise designed to send a shot across the bows of our Government. Giles Roddy, Cardiff.

THE reforms introduced by Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Tony Blair meant that, for the first time, a member of the Labour Party can have a say on who their parliamentary candidate should be. What the constitution should say, how the manifesto should look, and who should be on the NEC. One member one vote means members have real power for the first time.

It is ironic therefore that a slate of candidates who opposed every one of these reforms should now be putting up for the NEC. Liz Davies, Pete Willsman, Mark Seddon et al are not "grassroots party activists" — they are part of hard-left and Trotskyist groups and people who exist on the fringes of British politics, with an ideology and politics distinct from mainstream Labourism, and with politics such as nationalisation which have been decisively rejected by the British people.

The Labour households receiving their ballot papers this week should consider why Labour won in 1997 but lost in 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1992, and vote for NEC candidates who can help Labour win again in 2002. Paul Richards, London.

THANK you for naming the left slate for the NEC. I know know who not to vote for. I have grown increasingly weary of dissenters with nothing to offer the party beyond their dissent. Ian Wood, Sutton Coldfield.



Council sales' solid foundations

STRONGLY take issue with N Walsh (Letters, August 11). He is wrong to equate the transfer of council homes to local housing companies with Conservative privatisations. The housing stock in such transfers is valued according to a strict, accepted methodology. There are no cash windfalls for shareholders, no bribes or sweeteners. Council housing can be well managed and democratically accountable, but frequently it has been badly managed. Local housing companies are potentially far more democratic than the local government model while still allowing their parent councils to retain strategic functions, such as housing the homeless. William Hatchett, London.

AT ONE moment N Walsh accuses the Tories of "bribing council tenants to vote for

them by offering sweeteners such as temporary rent freezes, the next he says "the previous government's measures were designed to force up council rents".

In this part of Hertfordshire about 7,000 council houses, a third of the stock, were sold to tenants in the 18 years of Tory control. As a result, the council was able to pay off all its debt and spend more on the improvements of the remaining stock.

More resources were available both to enable housing associations to maintain a steady building programme of houses to rent, and to add to the community's assets by providing new sports facilities. Like Will Hatchett's city housing authority, Dacorum's Labour majority since 1995 has continued with these policies. Cllr Richard Jameson, Aldbury, Herts.

The Archbishop spoiled our day

WE HAVE been refused a Special Licence to marry outside our parish by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Our application was supported by the Archbishop of Wales; the vicar of the church at which we want to marry and our own parish vicar.

We have attended this church many times in recent years for private spiritual contemplation. Our refusal is on the grounds of not having attended regular services. It appears the Church of England struggles to accept individual relationships with God and individual choices on

worship as valid. Our wedding would bring 100 people to a Christian place of spiritual beauty which has special significance for us.

This refusal leaves us feeling excluded and angry, frustrated and misunderstood. Perhaps the Archbishop of Canterbury should listen to his local officers and respond to the heart-felt wishes of people in this country, instead of pushing more people out to civil ceremonies by alienating them.

Simon Smith and Jane Morrell, Llanfair Caeirion, Powys.

More agonies in the long wait for exam results

THERE has been a lot of media coverage about the problems being experienced by some students awaiting A-level results. While I appreciate the anxiety this may cause, does no one care about the thousands of year 6 pupils all over the country who are awaiting results — for SATs

taken in May and administered by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority? This, apparently, is due also to a software problem, which is "highly technical", according to the QCA's spokes-person. He obviously considered that, as a mere parent, I would not understand it.

What I really don't understand is why these 10 and 11 year olds had to experience the stress of a week of "tests" when a teacher's assessment alone would have been a fairer reflection of their attainment. Susan Pierce, Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Cleveland.

Further food for thought in the great genetically-modified potato debate

THE discovery that genetically modified food damages the immune systems of rats (Minister rejects call for genetic food ban, August 11) comes as no surprise to me. If ever there was a case for the need to hold a national referendum, this is it. The profound influence food has on the human organism is under the control of nature, and nature alone. Science still does not know all the ingredients in foods. More frightening still is that science does not know fully how food interacts within the system. Nature does. Every cell in our body uses incoming food to repair and replenish our tissues. If our

food is genetically distorted, no-one knows the consequences of such tampering. It will affect the very intra-cellular structure of our bodies. The long-term effects of such dietary adulteration will not show for another generation. By then it will be too late. These drug companies are only pursuing profits but try and argue that their tampering will make for better crop yield. Don't fall for this claptrap — it is gambling with our children's health. Alan Hunter, Edinburgh.

CAN WE be told how many varieties of potato commercially available have

been tested, and whether any of them have produced signs of damage in rats or other experimental animals? B Boughton, Woking, Surrey.

HAS anyone yet given any thought to the effect of genetically modified potatoes on seed-eating birds? It seems that insect-eating birds could also be endangered. At the moment we still have a choice as to whether or not to spray crops with toxic chemicals in order to kill insects. If crops are modified to make them resistant to insect infestation we will no longer have even that choice.

Before it is too late can we

not give some thought to the necessity of sharing this planet with other species? The argument in favour of genetic modification is, that unless we take this path we will not be able to feed the grossly enlarged future human population. Perhaps it would be better to modify the expected increase in the number of humans. S J Goddard, Stockbridge, Hants.

JIM DALEY reveals the high degree of ignorance about genetically modified food-stuffs (Letters, August 11). His "orange pippins", presumably Cox's, were produced by cross-breeding apples and

only apples, a completely natural process.

Genetically-modified vegetable and fruit, on the other hand, are frequently altered by inserting totally alien genetic material, often from animals or fish, into their DNA. Be aware of your facts, Mr Daley, before attempting to undermine, no matter how flippantly, resistance to the introduction of GM foods which few, if any, consumers want. Ron Graves, Birkenhead, Wirral.

ARE genetically modified potatoes on the menu for Geoff Rooker's daughter? Dr W Hipperson, Lindfield, W. Sussex.

Can Labour woo me back, metaphorically speaking?

MADEIRA Bunting (You're so naive, Ms Wilkinson, New Lads aren't the real threat, August 11) reads like a response from New Labour's rapid rebuttal unit. Unable to attack the substance of my argument — she admits she agrees with large parts of it — she instead attacks my professional reputation by claiming that this article is somehow personal and not political. Using women to attack other women on personal grounds to detract from the seriousness of their arguments — that New Labour is still run like a boys' club with a closed and controlling political culture — is a tired, tabloid technique. Her trivialisation of my arguments (and interview) is all the more pernicious because she fails to report my response to the central accusation. She speculates that the "love metaphor" is somehow emblematic of my romantic past, when in fact she has direct knowledge to the contrary. (I was asked about my use of the metaphor five

times in an extensive interview and provided more than adequate clarification.) She also suggests that Geoff Mulgan is one of the New Lads I am attacking, when I said he was atypical of the culture I was criticising.

As a writer, I often draw on personal metaphors which best illustrate my points and allow me to connect with the reader. The article was an authentic expression of my changing relationship to New Labour. I wrote it fully aware that I run the risk of being personally discredited by those whom I was attacking. But I did not expect Guardian journalists to so easily fall for the "party" line and become tools for the spin doctors. As to why I use this metaphor? It was an appropriate one. Over the years, lovers may have been and gone, but my relationship with the Labour Party has proved longer and more enduring. Whether New Labour can woo me back remains to be seen. Helen Wilkinson, San Francisco.

Owzat!

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André Weil

Beyond the frontier of numbers

ANDRÉ Weil, who has died aged 92, was one of the century's greatest mathematicians. He will be remembered not only for his own remarkable achievements, but for his profound conjectures, which helped direct research for a generation. He was also one of the founders of an encyclopaedic group of, largely French, mathematicians, jokingly named "Nicolas Bourbaki" after a general who fought in the Franco-Prussian war.

Weil was born in Paris and graduated from the Ecole Normale Supérieure at the age of 19. He then travelled extensively, spending two years at Aligarh Muslim University in India from 1920 to 1922, before returning to France, where he taught at Strasbourg until 1938. When the Second World War broke out he was a conscientious objector, and spent four months in Bonnes Nou-

velle prison, Rouen, where, as the son of Jewish parents, his life was imperilled. Eventually he was able to make his way to America. During this period he exchanged many letters with his younger sister, Simone Weil, the social activist and mystical philosopher who died in England in 1943.

It was also in the difficult years of the early 1940s that Weil began to formulate his profoundest ideas on mathematics. His first significant result, published in 1929, extended the ideas of Henri Poincaré, who had indicated that results in number theory might be obtained by thinking geometrically.

Weil's later conjectures drew together a range of geometric ideas of Italian origin with problems in the theory of numbers much studied by German mathematicians. They extended Poincaré's ideas from one to any number of dimensions, and made

sense only by a bold analogy with the developing field of topology. But while the conjectures made sense, and could even be verified in simple cases, none of the known topological methods applied, and Weil called for a massive extension of topological methods to the new setting. His four conjectures were eventually solved by later members of Bourbaki — two by Alexandre Grothendieck, and the last by Pierre Deligne — in the early 1970s. The methods invented led to the decisive tools by which Fermat's Theorem and several other major results in mathematics have recently been solved.

Weil was something about mathematics on little more than their own failure to prove a result they would like to be true. His conjectures were precise, but profound generalisations of known results, and by putting them

in the public domain he carried out the duty of the leading mathematicians of any period: to shape the future of the subject. In this enterprise he was greatly helped by Nicolas Bourbaki.

As a mathematician in his twenties, Weil had become painfully aware of how many of the older generation of French mathematicians had



André Weil, mathematician, born May 6, 1906, died August 8, 1998

Abdul-Amir Allawi

Diagnosis for Iraq

THE rise through the medical profession of Abdul-Amir Allawi, who has died aged 85, was almost as swift as his rise within pre-1958 coup Iraqi politics. In the early 1950s he was part of the circle around Muhammad Fadhil Jamali, whose liberal vision of Iraq — wherein Islamic identity held a specific status — appealed to young politicians.

In 1953, when Jamali became prime minister, Abdul-Amir was appointed health minister, and held the post under different premiers until the bloody coup headed by Colonel Kassem that ousted the Hashemite monarchy in 1958.

Helped by the growth of Iraq's oil wealth, he improved his country's health services with an almost evangelical enthusiasm. He targeted the elimination of malaria and other fatal diseases and established hospitals and clinics throughout Iraq. He created a hygienic dairy industry that still owes much of its success to his work.

Abdul-Amir was a Shi'a Muslim, originating from the Rab'i'a tribal confederation of southern Iraq. He was born into an affluent Baghdad merchant family, with his mother descended from the religious aristocracy. In 1926, he entered Baghdad's new Royal College of Medicine, which had faced opposition from traditionalists and graduates from Ottoman-administered medical academies.

After graduating in 1933, Abdul-Amir completed his studies — specialising in paediatrics — at London's Great Ormond Street Hospital. In 1936, back in an Iraq with medicine still heavily influ-

enced by traditionalist practitioners, he joined the modern Royal Hospital. His work was particularly influenced by Professor Lederer, an Austrian refugee paediatrician who allowed the young medic to develop his own techniques and skills.

In 1948, Abdul-Amir was a member of the Iraqi delegation to the Arab League's social affairs conference and soon afterwards he became a professor of medicine, and a government minister. After the 1958 coup, he fled to London where he joined the Child Health Institute. He re-established his private practice in Baghdad in 1961, but his position was not secure. In 1972, he was briefly arrested on trumped-up charges.

IN the 1980s Abdul-Amir lived in London, a self-imposed exile in a country he had grown to love. He kept up to date on medical and paediatric developments — and became a habitué of the Royal Society of Medicine library.

He cofounded a political advisory body and in 1992, fragile and ailing, he visited Iraq for the last time. In the now autonomous northern Kurdish city of Salahuddin he chaired the inaugural session of the Iraqi National Congress and was pleased to witness the end of opposition to a regime he believed had sapped Iraq of its energy and degraded the country.

He is survived by his wife, Raifa, and three children, Ghazi, Ali and Zena.

Sayed Nadeem A Kazmi

Abdul-Amir Allawi, doctor, born September 25, 1912; died July 11, 1998

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Analysis Germany

The sick man of Europe dances a jig

As British politicians sun themselves, Germans are back from their holidays, stumping the country before the general election next month. Chancellor Kohl (below) is in trouble yet the German economy is turning in one of its best performances for years. In fact the much-criticised Rhenish model is proving remarkably resilient. Reports of its death, says **David Gow**, were much exaggerated.

WHO's the sick man of Europe now? Not Germany. Rhenish capitalism, fatally ill only a few years ago, is ruddy of cheek. An allegedly sclerotic corporate sector has been dancing jigs. Gloomy predictions (mainly from the right) were wrong. Economic growth is predicted to top 2.5 per cent this year and to be more than 3 per cent next year. Inflation (in the west of Germany) is running at record low levels, less than 1 per cent. Earnings are rising by only 1.5 per cent, unemployment is falling, albeit from a peak, unit labour costs have declined in the past two years and productivity has risen by 6.4 per cent in the same period(1).

Britain, in sharp contrast, is on the verge of recessionary inflation, stagnation. Headline inflation was 3.7 per cent in June. Private sector earnings are growing by around 6 per cent, joblessness is increasing, productivity in manufacturing is falling and unit costs rising.

The turnaround in German performance coincides with the start of the contest for the federal elections on September 27 — Helmut Kohl got back to Bonn this week to campaign in earnest. Voters have the chance to draw a line under his 16 years as Chancellor and send him to retirement, his place in history

assured, in his modest bungalow in Oggersheim. Three months later, in January 1999, it could be Gerhard Schröder, the Social Democrat challenger, who will preside as Chancellor over the inauguration of the project to which Kohl has dedicated his gargantuan energy in recent years, European economic and monetary union and, with it, the eventual abolition of the mark, the currency that has come to symbolise for Germans their country's status as a stable, mature democracy in the past 50 years.

These momentous events have been anticipated by a resurgence of confidence and global ambition within German industry. Take Daimler-Benz, the country's biggest corporation. Last month it posted record profits in its final results before its marriage with Chrysler — officially a merger, in reality a German take-over — is consummated in early November. Similarly, it's the big German car makers, Volkswagen and BMW, which have had the financial muscle not only to take over Rolls-Royce and Bentley but also to challenge the American and Japanese giants.

Even in financial services, where the Germans had long been seen as laggards, it was the German stock exchange that made the running in the proposed merger with the City of London, which still sees itself as primus inter pares among European

bourses(2). The DFB, the German derivatives exchange, put the frighteners on the City's equivalent, Life Insurance companies such as Allianz are setting the pace for pan-European restructuring while banks such as Deutsche outpace the Brits as rivals to the American financial houses.

Is, then, the off-derided German model — based on consensus, power-sharing and devolution in business as in politics, egalitarianism and collective welfare — staging a come-back while the British variant of the Anglo-Saxon model, typified by shareholder value and flexible labour forces, gets consigned to history? Eight years after German reunification are we witnessing the rebirth of Germany as an economic and political giant of Europe that Margaret Thatcher so feared when the

Wall fell? The answer to both questions, hardly surprisingly, is both yes and no.

British (and American) neo-liberals stated the failings of the so-called Rhenish model. But it wasn't only they who praised the British approach in the aftermath of the 1997 election. The German government, for instance, had the exchange rate mechanism in September 1992, when it unified Germany, entered a deep depression and Britain a prolonged period of stagnation. Last year, Wolfgang Reitzle, a BMW director, told the annual German-British Forum conference in London last year(3). It was a mood summed up some years ago by a headline in the left-liberal weekly Die Zeit. German industry was "too fat, too heavy, too dear," reported Die Zeit — and that was just German industry

sion". Hans-Olaf Henkel, head of the BDI, German equivalent of the CBI, brought optimism on his head by hailing Britain as the model to aspire to by denouncing Germany's post-war constitutional settlement, with its federalism and proportional representation, as a root cause of the *Reformstau* (reform log-jam). "Our constant quest for consensus has become an obstruction. The debates on how to organise our national budget, our collective wage agreements and our health system offer prime examples of selfishness by individual groups in society struggling to keep what they have already got," Wolfgang Reitzle, a BMW director, told the annual German-British Forum conference in London last year(3). It was a mood summed up some years ago by a headline in the left-liberal weekly Die Zeit. German industry was "too fat, too heavy, too dear," reported Die Zeit — and that was just German industry

management has made industry leaner and fitter and — only partially thanks to the relative decline in the mark's value — more competitive. And that's despite a rate of corporation tax more than double Britain's and labour costs, particularly non-wage elements, 50 per cent higher than here. One way it has done so is by avoiding the highly-regulated, centralised bargaining system between capital and labour to negotiate the very kind of flexible labour agreements that BMW is now trying to introduce at its Rover plants in Britain.

DAIMLER'S Mercedes subsidiary, for instance, has reached an accord on flexible working in 28 separate plants. It includes annualised working-time contracts, three-shift working, Saturday shifts, reduced overtime and sickness pay and the like. The company has introduced new models that cost the same as the old ones but are better equipped — thanks to union agreement to cut costs by between 30 and 40 per cent, in doing so it has relied on factory works councils, an element in the much-criticised system of *Mitbestimmung* or co-determination. Similar agreements between management and works council have enabled Volkswagen (like Daimler) to increase employment.

According to Wolfgang Streick, director of the Max

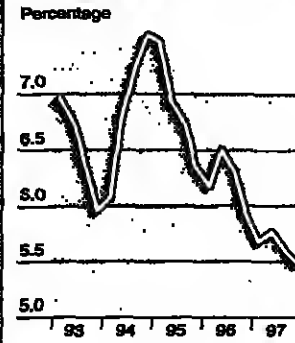
Planck Institute for Social Research in Cologne, *Mitbestimmung* helped manufacturing cope with structural change and has even provided a competitive advantage for companies that implement it properly(4). True to form, German companies, as well as downsizing and installing robots, have invested in retraining.

A manufacturing base, which they see as a bedrock of the modern economy, has been sustained. The price has been high. Companies such as Daimler or Siemens have embraced accoutrements of the Anglo-Saxon model, shareholder value, executive share options and New York listings. In addition, in good Anglo-American style, they have shed hundreds of thousands of jobs — 1.7 million since 1991.

While unemployment in Britain may now be rising, it moves up from a lower base. German joblessness is stuck at well over 4 million or 10.9 per cent and is even higher in eastern Germany, at more than 18 per cent. There are fears that, even with the current upturn, firms will go on laying off workers in the drive for a share of global markets.

German manufacturers have been increasing employment at home but they have also been exporting jobs. Investment overseas last year was a record DM57.5 billion as firms sought to escape high labour costs within the domestic market. Structural unem-

Interest rates



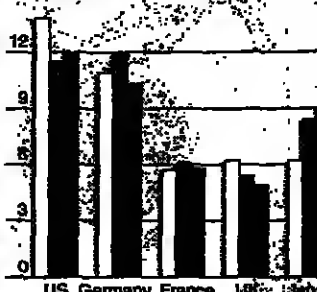
Dole queue

Level of unemployment, millions



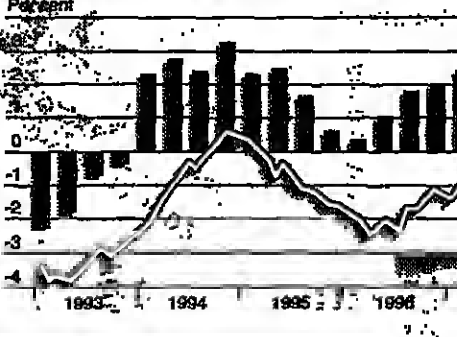
Global exporter

Percentage share of world exports



A climate for business

Diffusion Index



On the side of the good guys

employment rose between 1990 and 1997 to 9.6 per cent. In its Economic Outlook the OECD warns, not for the first time, that Germany requires much more substantial reforms — too British lines — of the social security, health care, pension and taxation systems to ensure longer-term fiscal sustainability and growth(5). Labour market reforms need to go further, well beyond relaxing protection against dismissal and reducing opportunities to take early retirement with no great loss of pay. The problem is that while some workers have shown a high degree of flexibility and new, small firms in high-tech sectors such as computing are beginning to create jobs the bulk of the population resists change. A pre-election poll of 6,000 voters, east and west, showed that virtually everybody shared the politicians' view that economic reforms and job-creation are key. But, while around a half believe flexible working hours are the key to fighting unemployment, none supports cuts in holiday pay or earnings, only one in five favours cutting corporate taxation and only a third want part-time working. The overwhelming majority wants the social security system to remain as it is.

THERE are those like the Federal Trust, based in London, which argue that Germany's (and Europe's) unemployment crisis stems not from the so-called Rhenish model but from the twin politico-strategic shocks of German unification (costing German taxpayers alone upwards of DM150 billion a year) and the run-up to EMU(6). The Rhenish model may have to undergo structural change to create more jobs and make the single currency area a success. But there is no need in our view to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Reports of the coming death of the model will turn out to be greatly exaggerated," wrote Dick Taverne, chairman of the trust's study group.

This appears to be the emerging view within Germany itself. Since unification, the German model has changed, a Daimler executive said recently and it will evolve further in the next millennium, combining aspects of the Anglo-Saxon model with its own concepts like social solidarity and consensus. Yet there is deep resistance to change among Germans, which helps explain why during his years in office Chancellor Kohl has signally failed to enact needed reforms. It will take first-class political leadership to break the logjam. Perhaps if they elect Gerhard Schröder next month Germans will be signalling that they are prepared to have the barriers opened for them.

Sources: (1) Spring report of the six leading German economic institutes, DIW, Berlin, May 1998; (2) Annual economic report of the federal government, Economics Ministry, Bonn, March 1998; (3) Guardian Analysis, July 30, 1998; (4) Jobs, growth and innovation in a wider Europe, published by Robert Fleming & Co. Ltd, London, 1998; (5) Financial Times, June 1, 1998; (6) OECD Economic Survey on Germany, Paris, August 1997; (7) Jobs and the Rhenish Model, Federal Trust, London, 1997. Graphics Sources: OECD; Bundesbank; Graphiques Financiers Sheehy; David Gow is the Guardian's industrial editor and former Germany correspondent.

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FinanceGuardian

Crude facts force BP-Amoco merger

World oil prices hit 25-year low

Dan Atkinson

WORLD oil prices hitting their lowest levels in a quarter of a century were an ominous backdrop for the multi-billion pound BP-Amoco merger unveiled yesterday.

Sir John Browne, chief executive of BP, said falling global energy demand had forced both groups to focus on competitiveness.

The price of a barrel of oil is back to its 1973 level in real terms and the planned 6,000 redundancies from BP-Amoco's workforce of 99,000 could be just the beginning. There could be more mergers, with job losses, as profits become thinner all round, say industry analysts.

The US Justice Department and the European Union's competition authorities will first have to clear the near-£70 billion tie-up, but with oil prices falling towards their lowest since the sixties, both groups might present a powerful case for consolidation in an industry in which too many participants are pumping too much oil.

This over-production, combined with collapsing demand in the Far East, has sabotaged efforts to prop up oil prices. Earlier this year Opec, the energy cartel, announced production cuts designed to help increase oil prices. But analysts say widespread cheating by some countries, especially Nigeria and Venezuela, means the cuts have been only 56 per cent effective.

Opec is due to meet in November. Even with the price slipping towards \$10 a barrel, analysts saw little point in an emergency Opec meeting that would do little but agree another ineffective cuts package.

Motoring groups have

urged the oil industry to pass on the falling cost of crude oil, but motorists are unlikely to find cheaper petrol for some time.

Edmund King, head of campaigns for the RAC, said: "Over 80 per cent of the cost of a litre of petrol goes to the Government in tax. But that should not be a justification for keeping prices artificially high."

Sir John denied that the crude oil price slide was the main trigger for the merger, but said depressed world demand meant all oil companies had to be more competitive.

Most of the job cuts are expected to be suffered by Amoco in the US, although there will be some in Britain.

Mark Redway, analyst at T Hoare, the London brokers, said few companies would be making money at yesterday's price of \$11.72 for a barrel of Brent crude. He forecast a temporary \$10 price, followed by an increase to about \$12 by the end of the year. In such a climate, he said, groups such as BP and Amoco might have decided that "big is beautiful".

The merger will push BP-Amoco into an elite group of huge oil combines including Shell and Exxon, ahead of smaller groups such as Chevron, Mobil, Texaco and Total. These rankings are calculated on stock-market value and energy reserves.

But the elite group might not remain exclusive for long if the price squeeze forces other mergers and takeovers. Given the reluctance of even unprofitable companies, private and state-owned, to drop out of oil production when energy prices sink, mergers may be the only way to bring supply back in line with demand.

Oil companies have been trying to maximise output at all costs to maintain earnings.



Motorists are unlikely to enjoy cheaper petrol prices for some time despite the low price of world oil

PHOTOGRAPH: RUSSELL BOYCE

Blockbuster amid the doom and gloom

Notebook/Mark Milner examines the effects of the world's biggest industrial merger when oil prices are on the floor

WHAT is it about BP and stock markets? Back in 1997 the British Government sold its final tranche of BP shares right into a global equity market meltdown. Yesterday with the London market hitting a seven-month low, Wall Street on the slide and investors pondering openly about the end of the long bull market, BP announced its blockbuster deal with Amoco.

Investors were immediately cheered. At one point, with the FTSE 100 share index down 100 points, BP's shares went up by more than £1, a 15 per cent gain against the background of a tumbling market. But then almost anything positive would cheer investors stuck in the oil sector these days. The oil price is on the floor — hovering around the levels of the early 1970s —

and storage facilities are bulging. Opec, once the terror of the industrialised world, struggles to maintain a semblance of production discipline. Small wonder that the exploration and production sector has underperformed the UK stock market by as much as a third this year.

But is the deal good news for anyone else? One of the most immediate impacts of the merger, if it clears the regulatory hurdles, will be job losses. The two companies say around 6,000 jobs will be "affected" in a combined total of almost 100,000. For the employees that is hardly something to cheer about, though BP workers may draw some comfort from indications that the axe will fall more cruelly in the US.

The deal throws up broader concerns, too. It underlines the competitive pressures

within the oil industry. BP and Amoco argue that in future the best investment opportunities will go only to those companies which can wield the biggest clout. BP-Amoco will be up there with the industry majors, Exxon and Royal Dutch/Shell.

But there is more to it than the Godzilla (size counts) syndrome. With the world awash with oil, the best chance for companies to increase their returns is by squeezing costs. BP and Amoco are looking for synergies savings of around \$2 billion a year — equivalent to more than a quarter of the sum of their combined earnings last year. Never mind the rhetoric, that is the kind of number investors like to hear.

Expect others to tread the same route as BP-Amoco, not just in the oil industry but elsewhere. Pharmaceuticals, banking, the automotive industry are examples which spring to mind. All have their individual reasons for restructuring — the cost of research and development, the impact of new technology, the perception that the most successful

car makers will be those with the most comprehensive model ranges. Perhaps in this context it is worth noting that BP chief executive Sir John Browne is a member of the international advisory board of Daimler-Benz, which is merging with Chrysler, and a non-executive director of SmithKline Beecham which tried but failed to agree merger terms with Glaxo.

Whatever the particular circumstances of individual industries, each is driven by competition on a global scale, by a need to cut costs — a need which almost always translates in job losses. Only those in the whizbang end of the technology spectrum will be able to build strategies based on boosting margins and/or market shares.

To structural adjustments must be added the redundancies which are the inevitable accompaniment of slower economic growth. In the UK, the latest evidence from the Confederation of British Industry shows just how depressed the manufacturing sector is. Government ministers and

the opposition are arguing, inevitably, about who is responsible. Shadow trade and industry minister John Redwood is planning the blame firmly on the strength of the pound, which he attributes to Government policies. The Government prefers to present the latest jobs losses — Siemens, Grove and yesterday BOC — as part of the fall-out from world economic problems.

BOTH have a case. The opposition's contention that the level of interest rates and the strength of sterling have undermined the manufacturing sector will find an echo in many a boardroom. By an odd coincidence, the Korean company Daewoo Electronics said yesterday it is expecting to double profits this year. President Chun Doo-hwan reckons the company can thank lower interest rates and the heavy depreciation of the won, exactly the remedy UK manufacturing industry would like to see in the UK. Domestically induced factors are not the only ones hit-

ting the UK. There is plenty of trouble in the global economy. Investors are sitting up and taking notice. Stock markets round the world shuddered lower again yesterday. It is surely ironic that the biggest danger on the financial markets' radar is the prospect of a devaluation of the yuan by China — a move which, it is feared, would set off another round of competitive devaluations across the Far East. The last bastion of communism is making a vital contribution to keeping the capitalist show on the road.

But Asia is not the only worry. The emerging markets in central and eastern Europe are suffering too. Tumbling share prices in Hungary may not matter too much (except to Hungarians) but what happens in Russia affects Germany, still the key motor for growth in continental Europe.

With so much gloom and doom to ponder, it is little wonder that investors were prepared to cheer BP-Amoco. Their alliance is at least positioned on the expectation of tough times to come.

Where BP Amoco will rank among world's biggest companies

Rank	Company	Market Value (£ billion)
1	General Electric (US)	175.1
2	Microsoft (US)	157.7
3	Coca-Cola (US)	122.8
4	Exxon (US)	101.4
5	Royal Dutch/Shell (Anglo-Dutch)	100.0
6	Merck (US)	92.4
7	Intel (US)	89.0
8	Wal-Mart Stores (US)	85.4
9	Pfizer (US)	83.4
10	NTT (Japan)	79.9
11	IBM (US)	75.0
12	Lucent Technologies (US)	72.3
13	Novartis (Switzerland)	71.2
14	BP Amoco (UK)	67.0
15	Bristol-Myers Squibb (US)	66.3
...and at home		
1	BP Amoco	67.0
2	Glaxo Wellcome	63.9
3	BT	62.2
4	Lloyds TSB	47.4
5	SmithKline Beecham	37.1

Rare breed in oil chief ranks

Profile

BP boss Sir John Browne: dapper, dedicated, driven

SIR John Browne, BP group chief executive, is anything but a typical oil man.

Dapper, impeccably turned out and emotions held well in check, it is about as hard to imagine Sir John in the gritty world of a processing module on a North Sea oil platform as it is to imagine him sloggish through the Alaskan or Colombian wildernesses in the search for black gold.

Nor is Sir John typical of that type of senior businessman who specialises in restructuring and cost-cutting for the benefit of investors.

The chief of Britain's premier oil company has been working for the same group for more than 30 years. He joined the group in 1966 when it was a career at BP was about as secure and staid as

in the civil service. With a first in physics from Cambridge and a masters in business from Stanford, he had considered academia but his father encouraged him to choose business.

An intensely private man, Sir John is unmarried. There have been suggestions of an unhappy outcome to a long-term relationship with one woman. If so, that might explain his dedication. His long working hours and capacity for detail are legendary.

Rising through the ranks of BP's exploration and production division in Alaska, the United States and London, Sir John became group treasurer in 1994. Two years later he was sent to the US to run Standard Oil, returning to head up the group's exploration and production in 1999. By then, BP's upstream operation was struggling with debt and Sir John cut thousands of jobs.

Equally proven is his ability to read the political runes of a large organisation such as BP. He managed to do well under the eras of both Bob Horton and David, now Lord, Simon as chairman.

Chris Barrie

The Partners Marriage made in the face of worldwide problems

From pioneer to a global power

A company rises through control, coup and change

BP owes its existence to the persistence of a Victorian adventurer William Knox D'Arcy. After negotiating a concession from the Shah of Persia to explore for oil, he began drilling in 1901.

For seven years D'Arcy, with the help of engineer George Reynolds, battled against severe weather, difficult terrain, a shortage of skilled labour and hostile tribes. In 1908, after securing additional capital from Burmah Oil, he struck

lucky. Deep under the ground at Masjid-i-Suleiman in south-west Persia, he made the first commercial oil discovery in the Middle East, signalling the emergence of that region as the world's richest producer of black gold.

D'Arcy and Burmah Oil formed the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in 1909 to exploit the find. At Winston Churchill's urging, the British Government purchased a 51 per cent stake in the cash-hungry company in 1914, shortly before the outbreak of the First World War.

The nationalisation of the company lasted until 1987 when the bulk of its remaining shares were sold off in a public flotation just as the stock market crashed.

Anglo-Persian had interests in the first major oil discoveries in Iraq (1927) and Kuwait (1938) before becoming embroiled in a protracted row with the Iranian government over the renegotiation of the company's concession. While other firms were arranging 50-50 deals with producer nations, the then chairman, Sir William Fraser, refused to strike the deal the Iranians asked for which resulted in the company's assets being seized.

The nationalisation sparked a crisis in which the British and US governments intervened. The company was sold off in a public flotation just as the stock market crashed.

A coup in 1953 installed the Shah as Iran's leader and an international consortium resumed business, with Anglo-Persian being granted a 40 per cent interest.

The company changed its name to British Petroleum in 1954 and began to broaden its operations to make good the loss of supplies from Iran, making strikes in Alaska in 1969 and in the North Sea in 1970 — the first major find in the UK sector.

The two great oil price shocks in the 1970s prompted a decisive change in the old concessionary relationships of the major

oil companies. Like its major competitors, BP lost direct access to most of its supplies of OPEC oil and OPEC countries took control of production and prices.

Its investments outside the Middle East, however, ensured its survival.

Today, the company is Britain's biggest producer of crude oil. It has operations in more than 70 countries. Last year it had around 56,000 employees worldwide and revenues exceeding \$43 billion.

It has 1,800 petrol stations across Britain, part of an international chain of 17,000.

Mark Atkinson

Chicago's gas giant rooted in Rockefeller empire

Memory of disaster off the French coast triggered by name

FOR many Europeans, the name Amoco will always conjure up memories of one of the world's worst oil disasters. In 1978 the Amoco Cadiz ran aground dumping 120,000 tons of oil on the French coast — six times

more than the 1969 Exxon Valdez spill off Alaska. After a 12-year court battle, Amoco was ordered to pay compensation of more than \$125 million (about \$75 million).

America's fifth largest oil company can trace its roots back more than 100 years to 1881, when legendary oilman John D Rockefeller started the Standard Oil Trust.

By 1911 Rockefeller's company had become so powerful in the US gasoline market that the US Supreme Court

ordered the company to split. More than 30 new independent oil companies were founded and one of them, Standard Oil of Indiana, went on to buy American Oil, which was founded by Louis Blawie in 1922.

American Oil sold gasoline under the Amoco name, but it was not until 1985 that Standard Oil of Indiana officially changed its name to Amoco.

Now the largest producer of natural gas in North America, it is based in Chicago and

operates 9,300 petrol stations across the Mid-West, Eastern Seaboard and South-eastern states. It has exploration and production facilities in 20 countries from Bolivia to the Caspian Sea.

In the UK, its operations range from gas terminals at Bacton on the Norfolk coast and on Teesside — where a 250-mile pipeline comes ashore from the North Sea — to a fabric plant in Consett, Co Durham, which makes carpet backing. It also has

bases in west London and Aberdeen. Six years ago Amoco was the first foreign oil company to explore the Chinese mainland. In 1986 production started from the largest oilfield in the South China Sea.

The company is the world's main producer of terephthalic acid, used to make polyester, cassette tapes and plastic containers and polybutene, used in cable insulation and adhesive.

Julia Finch

BP urged to withdraw Amoco from lobby group

THERE was immediate pressure yesterday for BP to impose its environmental awareness on its new partner. Friends of the Earth called on BP to withdraw Amoco from the Global Climate Coalition, a US lobby group which the British oil company left two years ago.

Tony Juniper, Friends of the Earth campaigns director, said the coalition was endangering the climate change treaty agreed in Kyoto last year. Amoco's continued membership would damage BP's environmental standing.

"BP did itself an enormous amount of good in leaving the GCC, accepting emission reduction targets and investing in solar energy," Mr Juniper said. "I was an investor in BP now I would be asking, have we just handed over our lead to Shell?"

BP said it was too early to consider the membership issue, but said Amoco also had interests in solar energy, through a US joint venture. The new group would be world leader in solar technology and the merger would make no difference to BP's stance on global warming.

The coalition, which includes oil and motor companies and power generators, has lobbied successfully in the US against action on climate change.

Mr Juniper described it as "an appalling example of power and vested interests".

Roger Cowe

Golf: US PGA Championship



Straight and narrow... Tiger Woods tees off down one of Sabalee's tight fairways during the first practice round yesterday. The tournament begins tomorrow. PHOTOGRAPH: DAN LEVINE

O'Meara to set standard of fir play

Mike Selvey is sleepless in Seattle at a tree-lined course that will favour the brave

THE Pacific North-west is the forgotten corner of American golf. Seattle, hidden away on Puget Sound just a hundred miles or so from the Canadian border and Vancouver Island, may be Bill's Gateway to the Microsoft world and the home of Boeing, but as far as golf's hype and hollering is concerned it has been just too far out on a limb, too easy-going for its own good.

They held a PGA championship in Spokane once, but that was during the second world war and they have not been back to Washington state

since. But after two fatal lightning strikes in 1991, at the US Open in Indianapolis and the US PGA outside Minneapolis, the PGA began the search and, on a forested plateau 500 feet above the Sound, Sabalee — "heavenly high ground" in the language of the Chinook Indian — got the nod.

The weather in what Jerry Seinfeld has called a moistening pad disguised as a city will be so sunny for the most part, and, if not that, then gently wet only. There promises to be nothing benign about the Sabalee Country Club course, how-

ever, for in what seems a relentless campaign to ruin the power game and emphasise strategy, the authorities have decided to add to the natural hazards of the course. The place is a spectacular development in its own right — 6,906 yards, par 70 for this championship — with avenues of fairways cut through stands of Douglas fir, cedar and hemlock, some reaching 150ft or more. According to Paul Runyan, who won two PGA titles and was the first teaching professional here, it is "like playing down a cathedral aisle". Maybe, Lee Janzen mused, the players should practise down 5th Avenue in New York.

Without the trees the course would be nothing. De-

fenceless. For the members they stand sentinel, waiting to stick in errant drives, offering in return either a humbling straight route back to the fairway and a dropped shot or sometimes the gamblers' glimmer of a manipulated recovery shot.

Encouraging the big boys to let rip if they dare while making allowance for cunning is what the architect had in mind. In these Tigerish days, though, that is not enough. So PGA events are generally 32 to 40 yards wide, and are reduced to between 27 and 32 yards for PGA Championships, have been nipped insidiously by a further couple of yards, while the gathering rough — not the hayfield stuff

swaying in Birkdale's gales but the texture of wire wool — has been set at a club-clinging four inches.

On Monday in practice Fred Couples, in his home town, took the head cover from his driver only twice in 18 holes, and for most it will be a maximum of five tee shots with the biggest club. So the one- or two-iron becomes the weapon of choice.

The winner, they say, will be a strategist, straight of course and someone, according to Nick Faldo, who can overcome the "sneaky slopes and the humps and humps", a top iron player who maximises his chances on slick but puttable greens. Someone like Colin Montgomerie with his gunharrel game, Mark

O'Meara, who has already won a brace of majors this year, or Lee Westwood.

Or for that matter the other Lee, Janzen, who ground his way round the Olympic Course in San Francisco to win the US Open this year in level par. He knows about hanging in. "It's very challenging," he said yesterday. "A great test. It plays long because you are going for position rather than length of the tee."

"There are birdie opportunities but you still can't be too aggressive. Playing smart golf is all very well but you have to hit exceptional shots too. I don't think even par will win, but maybe between five and 10 under. The harder it is, though, the less the field can run away from you."

Rugby League

Financial problems put paid to franchises

Andy Wilson on the blow to expansion hopes in Wales and Gateshead

AFTER all the talk of new Super League franchises in South Wales and the North-east next season, the 12 existing clubs will today be advised to delay any expansion for at least 12 months.

Maurice Lindsay, the managing director of Super League (Europe), said after the modest success of taking six fixtures "the Road" last month that he would be in favour of awarding franchises to Cardiff, Swansea and Gateshead, provided they were financially sound.

However, a report commissioned from the accountants Deloitte & Touche, which was considered by directors of SLE and the Rugby Football League on Monday, is believed to highlight financial problems in all three bids, which were raised with the bidders yesterday.

The Super League clubs are keen on having new clubs to produce more home games, and one insider last night said: "The mood in the game is still to expand." But they will be advised at a meeting in Huddersfield today that any expansion would be a considerable gamble, and SLE is more likely to encourage the three consortiums to reapply for a franchise for the year 2000, meanwhile taking fixtures to Gateshead, Swansea and Cardiff next season in an effort to increase the appetite for Super League.

Given rugby league's embarrassing expansion record, with only the Sheffield Eagles and London Broncos prospering, it makes sense to ensure that new franchises are ready rather than rushed in.

As an official from one of the consortiums said yesterday: "I would be far more comfortable if we were given the franchise for the year 2000. We had our application for this year in by May 1 and expected an answer within three weeks. But now it's half

way through August and we still haven't heard. We would have to be playing pre-season friendlies in four months; we could do it but it would all be a bit of a rush."

Meanwhile the World Club Challenge, which was such a flop for British teams last summer, is set to be revived in a different form next year. Shane Edwards, the chief executive of the Brisbane Broncos, said yesterday that his club would be keen to play the British champions in a one-off fixture in February or March if the Broncos win the Australian competition, and Lindsay confirmed that SLE hopes to include such a fixture in its 1999 programme.

This raises the intriguing prospect of the Broncos meeting Wigan, odds-on favourites to win the British game's first Grand Final in October. The clubs have played in two of the previous five World Club Challenges, with the Broncos winning at Central Park in 1992 and Wigan gaining revenge in Brisbane two years later.

Relations between the clubs are hardly cordial, after Wigan claimed to have been shortchanged on the financial arrangements for the last game, and they clashed again late last year when Wigan claimed to have signed Wendell Sailor only for the Broncos to dig in their heels and persuade the international winger to honour his contract with them.

Lindsay has also called a meeting of the Super League International Board, of which he is chairman, for September 25 in Sydney, even though the organisation is expected to be superseded by a new international board at another Sydney meeting called by the Australian Rugby League for next week.

As has so often been the case since the damaging Super League split, there is still confusion over who will attend each meeting. Neil Tunncliffe, the chief executive of the RFL, will attend the ARL meeting and still hopes to be joined by a Super League representative. But Lindsay insisted yesterday that SLE would not be represented as it had not originally been invited.

NatWest Trophy, semi-final: Hampshire v Lancashire

Paul Weaver at Southampton sees Lancashire maintain their outstanding late-season form

Crawley leads final march

AN EXCITED whisper swept through the Hampshire supporters minutes before this semi-final. Wasim Akram was not playing, out with a bruised toe.

Then there was 1991. Never forget 1991, when Hampshire won this trophy for the only time in their history, and on the way beat Lancashire by eight wickets, with Robin Smith, his brother Chris and David Gower leading the way.

To see how tightly these straws were being clutched was to realise Hampshire's task.

They never had much of a chance against a Lancashire side who are coming to the boil nicely late in the season.

They are third in the county championship, represent Essex's biggest danger in the Sunday League and yesterday reached the final of the NatWest Trophy with a victory over Hampshire by 43 runs. It is the 10th time they have reached the final of the competition, equalling Warwickshire's record.

Yet when Lancashire lost their last nine wickets for 88 runs yesterday, collapsing from 164 for one in the 40th over to 252 all out, Hampshire had a very real chance. But, as Jack Nicholson might say, this was as good as it got. Their own collapse started a little earlier. They were soon 28 for five and their chances lay in ruins.

John Stephenson hardly appeared to have taken guard



Petered out... Lancashire's seamer Peter Martin is congratulated by his team-mates after bowling the Hampshire captain Robin Smith. NEIL MUNNIS

before he was walking back to the pavilion, given out lbw against Peter Martin, although many thought he had been caught and bowled.

There was still only 10 on the board when Jason Loney was bowled by Ian Austin and three runs later there was a vast groan of anticlimax as Smith, their Man-of-the-Match when they beat Surrey in the final seven years ago, was caught behind off a beauty from Peter Martin that was pitched up and then cut away.

Thirteen for three became 23 for four when Giles White was caught behind off Andy Flintoff for eight in the 16th over and then 28 for five when Adrian Aymes went the same way off Glen Chappell in the 17th. This was rather funny. Aymes stood his ground, despite getting a thick edge, and contemplated his bootlaces. The umpire Chris Balderson appeared equally reluctant to make eye contact. He turned his head away before raising his finger.

Then Hampshire's best batting was seen. Kevan James (52) and Dimitri Mascarenhas (79) added 104 for the sixth wicket, a record for the county in the competition and for the individual batsmen, too. James was sixth out at

183 but it was only then, at least five overs too late, that Mascarenhas and Nixon McLean started a serious assault on the Lancashire bowling.

Mascarenhas struck three fours and two sixes in his 124-ball 73 and McLean thrashed 86 from 40 deliveries before he was spectacularly caught by Flintoff, left-handed and sliding on the deep midwicket boundary. Hampshire ended on 289 for nine.

Earlier, Lancashire's innings had been pulled round by a second-wicket stand of 116 in 23 overs between the acting captain John Crawley (79) and Neil Fairbrother (58), who was dropped by Aymes

when he had made only 19, one of three catches Hampshire put down. This should have been the springboard for a total in excess of 300, but Lancashire's middle order was swept away by Mascarenhas and Cartigan Connor, who each took three wickets.

Connor's performance, three for 31 from 12 overs, was remarkable for a man who had been on crutches only the day before. Connor, 37, who has been plagued by knee injuries and basically plays only one-day cricket these days, suffered hip problems on his return from Canterbury earlier in the week and had to have an injection before the match.

LANCASHIRE	
M A Akram c Aymes b James	17
J P Cartigan c Loney b Mascarenhas	79
M W Fairbrother c Stephenson	58
A Flintoff c Aymes b Mascarenhas	8
G O Lloyd c White b McLean	10
A D Mascarenhas c Chappell b Austin	73
R W K Wagg c James b Connor	19
I O Austin b Connor	28
G Chappell run out	1
C A Connor not out	5
P J Martin not out	5
Extras (10, w12, m8)	27
Total (80 overs)	289
Fall of wickets: 10, 194, 176, 189, 198, 200, 228, 218, 244.	
Referee: G. J. Gurney	
Umpires: J. Gurney, J. Gurney	
12-15-16-17: Hampshire 2-0-20-0; Lancashire 7-0-24-1; Stephenson 5-0-20-0; Loney 1-0-15-0; Mascarenhas 6-0-28-3.	

HAMPSHIRE	
J S Lacey b Austin	1
P J Stephenson b J Martin	5
G W White c Hogg b Flintoff	5
T A Smith c Hogg b Martin	3
T A Aymes c Hogg b Chappell	3
A D Mascarenhas c Chappell b Austin	23
K Wagg c Loney b Connor	19
N A M McLean c Flintoff b Martin	11
S D Loney not out	1
P J Harty b Hogg b Chappell	1
C A Connor not out	5
Extras (10, w12, m8)	27
Total (80 overs)	289
Fall of wickets: 8, 10, 15, 20, 28, 132, 178, 225, 226.	
Referee: J. Gurney	
Umpires: J. Gurney, J. Gurney	
12-15-16-17: Hampshire 11-0-54-3; Austin 12-0-25-0; Chappell 6-0-20-0; Flintoff 12-0-16-1; Yates 12-0-31-0; Westwood 12-0-36-0.	
18-19-20-21: Hampshire 1-0-15-0; Lancashire 12-0-36-0.	
Referee: J. Gurney	
Umpires: J. Gurney, J. Gurney	
Lancashire won by 43 runs.	

Athletics

Olympic stars turn on Modahl

Duncan Mackay in Zurich

THE Olympic champions Michael Johnson and Donovan Bailey last night turned on Britain's Diane Modahl over the time she has taken to reach a settlement for a botched drugs test. They are upset that the 800 metres runner's protracted attempt to win compensation from the administrators running the insolvent British Athletic Federation is preventing them from receiving the money they are owed for racing in the United Kingdom last year.

None of the BAF's debts can be settled until Modahl's claim is dealt with. "We can't receive anything until

this is sorted out," said Ray Flynn, the spokesman for the foreign athletes.

The athletes form the largest group of creditors after the decision of the BAF to go into administration last October with debts of nearly £2 million. Johnson and Bailey, owed £61,000 each, are concerned that the delay over Modahl is making the amount of money available smaller because of administration charges that are running at £20,000 a month.

"It's like being in a bus queue because we have to wait for one person to get on before we can," said Flynn.

"The bus will run out of petrol if we wait too long."

Modahl was banned for four years in 1994 but rein-

stated two years later after a legal fight funded by selling the family home. She plans to sue the BAF for £200,000 unless a compromise can be reached.

She had enjoyed the support of almost all the athletes until now. "She's winning about not getting a reasonable settlement but why should she be able to go to court and hold things up for another year?" Flynn said. "No one is being well done by this so why not settle?"

Appropriately, in a city famous for its banks, money talk dominated the eve of tonight's Weltklasse meeting in the Stadion Letzigrund after the decision of the sprinters, the world champions Maurice Greene and Ato Boldon, to

boycott the world's richest meeting because they say they are not receiving enough appearance money.

They blame the dispute on the new format of the Golden League, which gives a bonus of £1 million for athletes to share if they remain unbeaten in the seven-event series. "They've put a carrot out there that's basically impossible for anyone to get," said Emanuel Hudson, their agent.

After the opening three meetings, only five athletes remain in the hunt for the jackpot: Bryan Bronson (400m hurdles), Hicham El Guerrouj (1500m), Haile Gebrselassie (5000m), Marion Jones (100m) and Charly Opara (400m). All, not surprisingly, are here.

Chess

McShane is simply grand

Leonard Barden on 'Lucky Luke', at 14 the youngest Briton to pass the magic mark

LUKE McSHANE has become the youngest Briton to pass the magic mark of three years to achieve a grandmaster result. The City of London schoolboy won his final three games in the international tournament at Lippstadt in Germany to secure seven points from 11 and share first prize with Giorgi Giorgadze of Georgia.

At 14 years eight months, he missed the world age record held by the Ukraine's Rustam Pomarev by six months but he is the fourth youngest to score a GM result. He is younger than was Bobby Fischer, who became a GM at 15, and Michael Adams, the current UK No. 1 and world No. 4, who set the previous British record when he scored his GM results at 17.

Under International Chess Federation (Fide) rules, McShane needs another two GM results before the title can be awarded. Now that he has broken the ice after several abortive attempts at a GM norm, he can hope to complete Fide's

requirements by doing well in Oxford and Hastings in December.

Earlier in his career he won the world under-10 championship and became the youngest UK player to beat a grandmaster or qualify for the British Championship.

He already plays No. 1 for Erfurt in the Bundesliga, the strongest league in the world, and became an international master, the stage below grandmaster, last year in Gelsenkirchen.

The Germans call him "Lucky Luke" because several of his opponents have blundered in favourable positions. He kept up this reputation at Lippstadt, where he had only four out of eight with three games to go, including a loss to the Zugzwang computer programme which also beat him last year.

He looked out of it, needing to win all three, which included two of the top seeds. But he beat the Germans Stefan Kindermann and Klaus Bischoff, seeded

two and three, and the computer game was declared void for title calculations under Fide rules, and Lucky Luke had his GM result by the narrowest margin.

McShane said: "I had a weird endgame early on when I had to under-promote a pawn to a bishop to avoid stalemate. So after I managed to draw a pawn down in 90 moves against Giorgadze in round eight, I thought I ought to go for the GM score, though I didn't really expect to win three out of three. Then Bischoff was killing me in round 10 but he gave up his queen for a mate which wasn't there, so it all came right at the end."

McShane's latest advance is a further boost to the England team, already European champions and leading challengers to Garry Kasparov's Russians at next month's Olympiad in Kalmykia.

Top international matches are played over four boards, and England's top trio of Adams, Nigel Short and Matthew Sadler all rank in the world top 20. McShane's progress is such that he may well aspire to this level within a few years.

Cycling

Four Italian riders fail blood tests

THE sport's image was further tarnished yesterday when four Italian members of the Mobilvetta team were disqualified from the Tour of Portugal after failing blood tests.

Paolo Alberati, Graziano Rediella, Mario Monzoni and Renzo Ragnetti were among 32 riders tested at random by the International Cycling Union (UCI) medical team. Their haematocrit levels — the proportion of red blood cells to the total volume of blood — were above 50 per cent, which is considered a health risk.

Meanwhile, the Once team from Spain, who withdrew from last month's Tour de France during the drugs controversy, have threatened to boycott the race in future.

The Once president Jose Maria Arroyo said: "If we are given guarantees that our trucks and coaches will not be checked right down to their tyre pressure, and that there will be no other interference beyond the internationally accepted drug testing, then we will take part."

Eight riders' representatives met top UCI officials in Lausanne yesterday to discuss the growing drug crisis.

SportsGuardian

England pull plug on British League

Paul Rees finds Welsh 'differences' blamed for putting ambitious plan on the backburner

THE Welsh were last night trying to salvage the embryonic British League only hours after Twickenham pulled the plug on the idea.

The ambitious scheme to have the 14 Premiership One clubs, four Welsh clubs and Scotland's two major provinces play in the same league was aborted by Twickenham, which said it had failed to bridge considerable differences with Wales.

The new chairman of the Rugby Football Union's management board, Brian Baister, and his opposite number on the Welsh Rugby Union, Glenor Griffiths, met on Monday. But last night Twickenham interpreted WRU concerns as dithering and issued a statement saying there would be no British League this season.

Baister was conciliatory, accepting that there were "logical and other difficulties" that both sides faced in trying to put the competition together for this season. I am disappointed but we will continue to discuss with all interested parties the viability of a cross-border competition during the coming months.

He pointed to three areas of difference between the two unions which were not going to be resolved quickly: the demand that the Allied Dunbar clubs drop legal action through the European courts against the International Rugby Board, Wales's demands for eight clubs to be involved, and their insistence that a long-term agreement be drawn up.

The speed of Twickenham's action took Griffiths by surprise. "We have not rejected the idea out of hand for next season, but we have expressed worries, not about the idea of a cross-border competition because it is something we have long sought," said Griffiths during a break in his executive's meeting.

The WRU faces potentially greater problems without a British League than if it goes ahead, which is why its executive committee was last night burning the midnight oil.

The Welsh now face the problem of what to do with Cardiff and Swansea, who

have been given until this evening to sign a 10-year agreement with the union or face expulsion.

The pair had hoped to play the Allied Dunbar One clubs in a series of friendlies this season, but both Twickenham and the WRU refused permission. Cardiff have said they will not sign and that they will go ahead with the friendlies without permission if necessary.

Baister made his move last week after the English clubs, who pulled out of the European Cup and the European Shield in protest at the way the tournaments were organised, had failed to set up an alternative cross-border competition with the leading French clubs and Cardiff and Swansea. Had he succeeded the English clubs would almost certainly have returned to the European competitions.

However, the Welsh had a number of concerns: who would run the competition? Why were only four Welsh clubs invited to take part when eight were in its Premier Division?

How could the other four be accommodated in its domestic structure? How would relegation and promotion be settled?

Would the English clubs drop their action against the International Rugby Board, a body which is chaired by the Welshman Vernon Pugh? How would the money generated be shared out? Would existing television and sponsorship agreements be compromised?

The WRU insisted on all its Premier Division clubs being involved because it was facing the threat of legal action from some of the four who missed out: Neath, Llanelli, Bridgend and Caerphilly.

"The chances of getting this going for next month were always remote," said Eddie Jones, the chairman of the Welsh premier group of clubs.

"We have argued for an Anglo-Welsh league for years, and for the life of me I cannot understand why it had to be proposed just a couple of weeks before the start of a new season. We have to look to 1999-2000 to get this organised and that would mean that every club would know what it had to aim for."

Fingers rapped over Canterbury tale



Tourists escape 'danger' but not unscathed

Nigel Fuller at Canterbury

THE Sri Lankan tourists were pitched into a Jamaica-style controversy yesterday when the strip for their one-day match against Kent was declared dangerous and play was switched to the wicket used in last Sunday's AXA League fixture against Hampshire.

The first delivery of the day, a no-ball from Dean Headley, lifted and struck Sanath Jayasuriya on the left index finger. After lengthy treatment he was left wringing his hand twice more before, in the fourth over, he summoned the physiotherapist again after Alan Igglesden struck him on the right wrist.

A hurried conference was called involving the umpires Vanburn Holder and

Trevor Jesty and the captains Avarinda De Silva and Steve Marsh. "Both captains expressed concern over it and we decided it was not in the batsmen's best interest to continue," said Jesty. "We didn't want anyone to get hurt."

Harry Brind, the ECB pitches consultant, is expected to pay a visit today. The 50-overs match was abandoned and substituted with one of 45, but without Jayasuriya. However, he later emerged — finger taped and wrist bandaged — declaring himself hopeful of facing South Africa at Trent Bridge on Friday in the first match of the triangular one-day series.

The Sri Lankans passed Kent's 176 for eight with 12.2 overs to spare. De Silva (66) and Marvan Atapattu (53) sharing an unbroken third-wicket stand of 128.

Pitch evasion... Michael Grantham, above, Kent's head groundsman, uses the heavy roller before yesterday's tour match, but the Sri Lankan opener Romesh Kaluwitharana will testify that the pitch left much to be desired after facing an Alan Igglesden lifter

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADY HENRY



Greedy ghost delivers the goods



Frank Keating

WHEN Glenn Hoddle, to the privacy of his La Manga hotel room in May, told an apparently drunk Paul Gascoigne that he would not be playing in the World Cup, the player kicked a chair and then let rip with a barrage of abuse.

The England coach elaborates: "He was ranting, swearing, slurring his words, not making much sense... He was like a man possessed... I thought he was going to hit me. But there was a large lamp to my left and he viciously smashed his fist into it. Shards of glass exploded all over the room."

Thus Hoddle spouted in the Sun newspaper yesterday in an appalling breach of confidence by a man who is handsomely paid to know better. But once the tournament was over, the England coach's first duty was not to his players, dropped or otherwise, but to the lucrative sale of the serial rights of his own ghosted "diaries".

Hoddle's employers should (privately) have him out, for it is a disgraceful state of affairs: football must wholeheartedly sympathise with Gascoigne's pain and restrained response issued through his agent Mel Stein yesterday. "We are obviously disappointed the England manager has gone public on this issue for we had regarded our conversations between us as private, and we will continue to do so."

Hoddle should never have been given his position of authority and trust unless he realised implicitly the crucial need, at certain times, for priestly silence.

Since he was given the job his public mutterings and evasive meanderings have, to put it kindly, left much to be desired. In France he bawled *L'Espresso* back with a gormless lack of tact, but yesterday's humiliatingly public backstabbing of one of his players takes the biscuit. Gascoigne deserved much more from the coach than the banner headline *Drunk Gascoigne Trashed My Room*. It is a present new low in English national football management, and all of Hoddle's surviving predecessors must have winced when they read it.

To put a shrieking tail on it

imprimatur on what, in Hoddle's case, should have remained a totally private matter is disreputable and demeaning. There was no remote reason for the coach to reopen the Gascoigne saga in such nit-picking and precise detail; he could have diplomatically skirted around the truth, as have a host of autobiographers down the centuries.

Or did Hoddle coldly calculate that precise chapter and verse on Gascoigne's reaction would ensure a good bundle of booty from the Sun for the publisher Andre Deutsch's pre-publication serial rights to set against his already handsome advance? For heaven's sakes, doesn't Hoddle earn enough already — especially for one with his track record which, unless I've been reading the wrong scores, is none too hot.

Is the FA going to rap its employees on the knuckles? Two years ago, when his then cringing equivalent Ray Winstanley got into a public spat, courtesy the Daily Express, over his ghosted book and opinions on Devon Malcolm, Winstanley's masters at Lord's fined him £2,000 and it wasn't many months before the Yorkshireman left the job.

Would the FA be fining Hoddle similarly? Better ring Lancaster Gate's mellifluous press officer David Davies. Now there's a diplomatic smoothie and seamless sparker! If ever there was one, why on earth, come to think of it, didn't the inarticulate Hoddle consult Davies before further blackening one of his players' reputations?

Hang on, what's this? In small print on the cover of the England manager's upcoming diary is the legend "With David Davies".

As Hoddle and particularly Davies should be well aware, private grief is better left behind closed doors and far away from public scrutiny. That fact was never better illustrated than by the utterly crass decision by the England and Wales Cricket Board to allow a television camera into England's dressing-room on Monday.

This was a different sort of "appalling". The intrusive eye turned the room into a dungeon-morgue. Only when someone doled out their vodka phone caps did the morose warworks hint at being alive because, suddenly, vodka equals loot and perks. It was excruciating.

Lord MacLaurin was seen to attempt to open a bottle of bubbly. The camera was probably his idea. Another horrendous one. The pitifully fixed smiles of poor Ian Salisbury and Graeme Hick remain indelibly logged in the mind. Another appalling case of players' confidence and private moments breached for money.

Atherton recalled in limited about-turn

David Hopps on a further move away from England's bits-and-pieces one-day policy

ENGLAND backtracked further from the experiment of fielding distinctive squads at Test and one-day level yesterday when they recalled Michael Atherton, one of the heroes of their Test campaign against South Africa, for the Emirates Triangular Tournament.

This represents another shift from the policy trumpeted only a year ago when Adam Hobbins was installed as England's limited-overs captain primarily because Atherton, then in charge of the Test side and struggling for batting fluency, was regarded as too restricted and unadaptable for the one-day game.

Alec Stewart's accession to the captaincy had already led last month to the abandonment of Hobbins's alternative captaincy on the ground that Stewart's versatility in both Test and one-day cricket made the policy obsolete.

Although only six of the England's triumphant Reading Test side are named

in the one-day squad to face South Africa and Sri Lanka — Mark Butcher, Mark Ramprakash, Ian Salisbury, Andrew Flintoff and Dominic Cork are excluded, the last two perhaps only temporarily — the shift away from the bits-and-pieces policy so fashionable a year ago is evident.



Atherton... Test testimony

Kent's all-rounder Matthew Fleming, like Warwickshire's Dougie Brown before him, has been jettisoned. Three players from the Texaco Trophy squad against South Africa in the spring have also been left out: Chris Adams, Darren Maddy and Chris Lewis, who has discovered that using the words "selection" and "left" in the same sentence does not assist career advancement.

Alan Mullally, strangely omitted from England's provisional World Cup squad of 37 only a fortnight ago, finds himself back in the 12. Presumably they forgot about him.

The inclusion of more specialist players in the one-day squad will need no justification for many, but England provided it anyway. The theory advanced is that the white ball, which will be used both in the Emirates tournament and during next year's World Cup in England, swings and seems more than its red counterpart.

There has yet to be a shred of scientific evidence to suggest why this might be the case, and probably never will be. But cricketers will struggle, suggest that when it comes to

swing and seam, scientists have a lot to learn, and trust what they believe is the evidence of their own eyes.

"We've learnt a bit from both the West Indies and the Texaco series recently and the white ball may be the key to things," said David Graveney, the chairman of selectors.

"We've noticed that scores in the AXA League have been relatively low against the white ball and, faced with this, we wanted options with specialist batsmen and bowlers just in case the ball moves around a fair bit."

One-day squad

*A J Stewart (Surrey), age 35; 102 one-day caps
M A Atherton (Lancs), 30; 53
A D Brown (Surrey), 28; 9
R D B Croft (Gloucestershire), 28; 26
M A Ebdon (Kent), 28; 17
A R C Fraser (Middlesex), 33; 37
A F Giles (Warwick), 25; 2
D Gough (Yorkshire), 27; 41
G A Hick (Worcestershire), 32; 71
A Hobbins (Surrey), 26; 17
M Hussain (Essex), 30; 15
M V Knight (Warwick), 28; 24
P J Martin (Lancashire), 29; 16
A D Mullally (Leics), 29; 8

A likelier explanation is that the lower scores have been influenced by a wet summer, but even that might be equally relevant. Next year's World Cup begins before May is out and England believe that the uninhibited strokeplay produced in the last World Cup on the subcontinent by the likes of Sri Lanka's Sanath Jayasuriya will be far more difficult to reproduce.

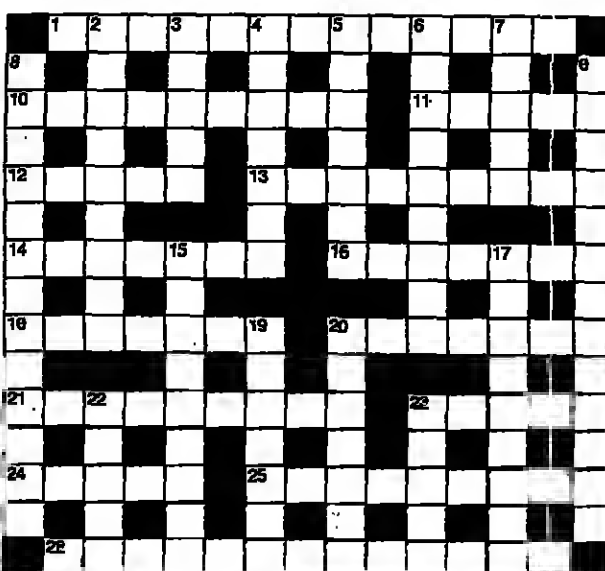
The option of Atherton and a stable start to the innings therefore gains in appeal, although what England will make of it if Jayasuriya thrashes the South Africans around Trent Bridge in the opening Emirates match on Friday is anybody's guess.

Ally Brown and Nick Knight, the more flamboyant alternative and sharers of a Texaco century stand against South Africa at Headingley in May, are reunited today for the English Counties XI against the same opposition on the same ground.

Hobbins, meanwhile, will probably lead an England batsmen's squad in Bangladesh in October. The specialists will then be heading for Australia.

Guardian Crossword No 21,351

Set by Araucaria

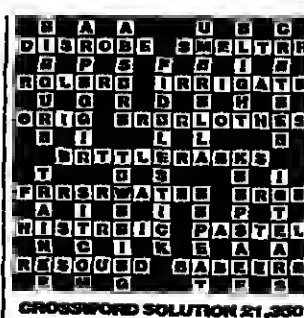


Across

- 1 Topsy-turvy, any-ways legend in pub and hospital? (5,7)
- 10 Great king and queen follow a classical law (5)
- 11 River to enter hole and divide (5)
- 12 Look! Feet — yards — high! (5)
- 13 Cook fowls and dine where it's always cold (5)
- 14 Much love of money among Poles produces cooked lamb (7)
- 16 Cocktail takes little time and lot of noise (7)
- 18 Pub drink reported: that's no way to travel! (7)
- 20 Muslim hesitantly acquiring more cheerful disposition? (7)
- 21 Fish and fruit only (5-4)

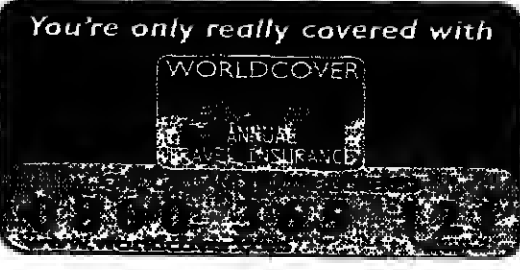
Down

- 2 Having finished a game they should go to school (4,5)
- 3 Creep into a dying mood (5)
- 4 Crazy individual takes issue with US president (7)
- 5 Do fix your hair for making an entrance (7)
- 6 Master criminal wants holiday — France? (4,5)
- 7 Lament for something terrible outside Gateshead (5)
- 8 Villain of glen suffers 26... (7,2,4)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,350

- 9 ... if extreme, 1(4,4,5)
- 15 Make a new picture and put in name for merchantman (3,5)
- 17 Con man could be a cart with a skirt (5)
- 19 Underground development is excessively promoted in fashion (7)
- 20 Lawman's wine sounds very loud (5)
- 22 Laughter should tidy up the hospital (5)
- 23 Set of rules for church made by bishop, for example (5)
- 24 Solution tomorrow
- 25 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 133 3333. Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Service supplied by ATIS



"I followed it for 10 minutes. It looked like an old mammoth, great hairy thing."
The wild boars come back to England
Society, G2 pages 12-13

